

# SEXUAL DISCOURSE ABOUT ELDERLY PEOPLE IN JAPAN AND BRITAIN

Kazumi Oh

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil  
at the  
University of St Andrews



2005

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**University of St Andrews, April 2004**



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## DECLARATIONS

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## Acknowledgement

I began this study as a postgraduate student in the Department of Social Anthropology at University of St Andrews, Scotland, U.K.. Thus, first of all, I will be forever grateful to my supervisor Dr. David Riches and Emeritus Professor Joanna Overing who gave me a chance to study in their institution. In addition to this, I feel a great debt of gratitude to both Sakai Seiryō Rotary Club (my sponsor Rotary Club) in Osaka, Japan and Kilymont Rotary Club (my host Rotary Club) in St Andrews, Scotland. The ambassadorial student programme of the Rotary Club provided financial assistance in long-lasting fellowship. My particular thanks to the members of the Committee of the Ambassadorial Student Grant in District 2600 of the Rotary Club.

Moreover, I would also like to express my respect and gratitude to Professor Souichi Shinohara in the Department of Economics at Doshisha University, in Kyoto, Japan, Professor Osamu Nishimura in the Department of Economics at Doshisha University, Professor Masahiro Hosoya in the Centre for American Studies at Doshisha University, associate Professor Susan Pavloska in the Institution for Language and Culture at Doshisha University, Professor Makoto Hogetsu in the Department of Sociology at Kyoto University in Kyoto and Professor Motoji Matsuda in the Department of Sociology at Kyoto University; it is a pleasure to acknowledge the benefit of their opinions and their inspiring interest and suggestions. In particular, I hope to express here some fraction of my gratefulness to Susan Pavloska and her husband, Professor Yoshimaru Yoda in the Department of Integrated Human Studies at Kyoto University, for their patience, loving care and support leading me to the end of this long project.

I am obliged for the warm and efficient help given to me by Wilda Thomson who is my counsellor in Kilymont Rotary Club and her fiancé Peter McKinnon and their daughters, Louise, Fiona, Keity and Mary and Wilda Thomson's parents, Dorothy and Kenneth Brown. For their good care of me, far in excess of what the relationship between an ambassadorial student and his/her Rotarian counsellor requires, I received an exquisite pleasure in Scotland. I also would like to express my gratitude to the former Director of the District 1010 of the Rotary Club, Jack Daniels, and his administrative secretary Pamela Small, who welcomed me to St Andrews.

There are good librarians behind good studies. Without the help of deliverers and librarians at the branch library of the National Library of Scotland, the Causewayside Library in Edinburgh, this study would have been impossible.

I have also been blessed to have had many wonderful friends in St Andrews. Those who were studying outside native country have contributed their share. In particular, I am greatly indebted to Chiharu and Paul Yokota, Nicole Straub, Hui-Chun Lee and Su-Za Jung and Chan Seok. Their work and kindness has been an inspiration of my own. I must express my special thanks to Judith Salters, Fat Cat, Fiona Barnard Smith and Ian Smith. International students can not do good work without great help from local peoples. St Andrews has a long history of having welcomed many international students from Europe and recently from Asian countries and North America as well. People who live in St Andrews showed me their great hospitality and kindness.

I am deeply indebted to Japanese friends and secretaries in the Department of Sociology at Kyoto University who sent me a lot of letters, cards and e-mails. Their words aided me along the way during Scotland's terrible weather and cold. I especially appreciate Akiko Kawakita, Tomoko Okada, Carly Toplis and Kazuko Matsui who gave me splendid and neverfailing support.

I would like to thank my family who have stood by me these many years: my Mom, Miyoko Oh, my Dad, Kinmai Oh, and my younger brother, Masanori Oh.

Finally, most important, I am proud of expressing my true appreciation of my supervisor Dr. David Riches and his wife Elizabeth Riches. I still clearly remember the first day I arrived at St Andrews on 18th of October 2001. David Riches whose inimitable jokes, compassion and understanding sustained me to the end, was the first person who welcomed me in St Andrews. After finishing my registration as a student of University of St Andrews David Riches took me to the supermarket, Tesco in St Andrews. It made me sense that David Riches has extraordinary patience and grace to take care of his students. David Riches' careful readings made me convinced that he would contribute substantially to my development as a social anthropologist. David Riches provided for all my academic needs. I have always benefited immensely from the discussions held by him. Following David Riches I would like to be faithful towards my study. Eskimologist David Riches shows his best smile whenever he speaks about Inuits.

What is most crucial to have been fortunate to have the assistance from David Riches is he has never complained about my English. Whenever something wrong happens international students tend to attribute it to our poor command of English. Sometimes this loss of confidence interrupts our study abroad. Thanks to David and Elizabeth Riches I have never experienced such a miserable feeling.

Due to my health problem it has taken nearly three years to complete this dissertation. After I once returned to Japan I totally lost touch with David Riches. When I came back to St Andrews, without any explanation, David Riches welcomed me again. When I nearly lost my life just after I arrived at St Andrews Elizabeth Riches saved my life by getting me quickly to hospital.

David Riches has health problem as well. Despite poor health he gave me his best blessing. David Riches shaped and facilitated my work. To elaborate my thesis we spent countless hours in his house called 'Seafield' in Anstruther, Fife, Scotland. We, including Elizabeth Riches sometimes had lunch together with wonderful chatting. I feel very lucky to have their love, wit and support during these years. I will never forget these sweet memories.

## **Abstract**

This thesis attempts to pursue and envisage the concrete pathway relating elderly people's sexuality at a discourse level in a broader socio-political context in Japan and Britain as modernised industrial societies. Three key facets may greatly enrich not only academic discourse on elderly people's sexuality but the various meanings regarding being old in modernised industrial societies. (1) Change in sexual discourse about elderly people demonstrates human sexuality and so allows us to forge ties with scientific data, medicine and sexology. (2) At the same time, we can appreciate that at a superficial level, changes in discourse refer to most basic heterosexual, married and age-stratified gendered relationships. (3) Notwithstanding such change in discourse, involving the move from asexuality to sexuality, one particular discursive idea, namely the 'critical view' of elderly people's sexuality, has always existed as a background notion. We address the first and second points from the social constructionist view. On the first point, the elderly population are capable of initiating themselves the fresh thinking that reflects changes in discourses, with the soon-to-be-old middle aged as catalysts. However, with regard to the third point, considerations of the incomplete nature of the change in discourses are closely related to the question of the elderly's own unique biological position. Elderly people's own unique biological position is beyond social constructionists' reach.

A look beyond the positions of biological essentialism and social constructionism may provide us with the opportunity to view elderly people's sexual and sensual fulfilment from a perspective that would otherwise be impossible. Such analyses are important in listening to noises of elderly people's sexuality within "an ensemble of" highly modernised and industrialised societies. We may dare to refer to these noises as the freedom of being marginal.

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# 1 Introduction

## (1) Tidy Conceptual Waters [De Cecco and Elia 1993:4]

To be sure to differentiate the biological and social/cultural levels of discourse, academics use sex to enunciate the physical and material aspects that compose actors and their behaviour, and sexuality to emblazon the interpretations or meanings assigned to the body, behaviour and desires in various individuals, and historical and cultural contexts. In contrast to this, to the public, sexuality and sex are generally considered to be the same.

What is called biological essentialism is clearly much more closely related to the physical and material aspects that make up actors and their behaviour. This academic notion, which has its origin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is a version of conventional beliefs about sexuality, that held that 'sex'<sup>1</sup> is a biological imperative for reproduction. [McWhorter 1999] In the course of 'science' or 'scientific' exploration, it was medicine, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that took over biological essentialism with regard to sexuality. In the current 'scientific' garb of sexology, a significant attempt to update the conventional view has been undertaken, while retaining the notion of the heterosexual-homosexual dichotomy and medicine's mind-body dualism.

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis sex always intends sexuality and sexuality always intends sex as well.

In biological essentialism the motivating power for the sexual act, not only in the popular imagination but also in academic cultural and social theories, lies within the physical recesses of the body, particularly the genitals. As John P. De Cecco and John P. Elia postulate, sexual attraction is believed to be first of all a physical attraction – the overwrought working of sexual instinct, drive, proclivity, tendency, impulse or body chemistry – that precedes cultural influences and predetermined limits set by culture. [1993:2]

This conceptualisation of sexuality is grafted into the ontological dualism of the Platonic-Christian tradition, in which body and soul are seen as hierarchical opposites, and its pious Cartesian successor, which differentiates between mind and body. Plato took the soul (now self or identity) as being the true person due to its self-consciousness and reason, and the body as being its prison, or even its grave, as a temporary, transient accommodation for the soul during its time on earth. It is not a great leap for us to see a continuum between Christian practices in the idea of a mortal body and an immortal soul and Plato's conceptions. This was repeated in Descartes' ontological dualism of *res extensa* and *res cogitans*.

In this dualist perspective, the physical should be toned down and subordinated to the spiritual. [Öberg 1996:704] Therefore, linking with the contingencies of everyday experience, these dualistic and hierarchical views have given rise to biological essentialism's perceptions of sexual instinct, drive, proclivity, tendency, impulse or body chemistry, after countered by social control and social intervention on individuals. The realisation of threat and alarm by social regulations imposed on individuals generates inner feelings and compulsion as a special power to resist rational control and enables us to dream different, uncountoured and ungendered societies.



Definitive proofs from anthropological studies concerning the ‘unbelievably malleable’ nature of human nature seemed to be a death blow to biological essentialism. Margaret Mead, who lived with the Samoans (however briefly), was no doubt fixed by the long tradition of romanticising and naturalising primitive cultures through her romantic vision, such that she became the most important person to reconceptualise gender and sexuality. Similarly Bronislaw Malinowski lived amongst the Trobriand Islanders providing raw data for cultural relativism.

This adumbration presents social constructionism as a tenet. It is filled and shaped by a critique of biological essentialism and an independent set of principles. Carole Vance states, “Social construction theory in the field of sexuality proposed an extremely outrageous idea. It suggested that one of the last remaining outposts of the ‘natural’ in our thinking was fluid and changeable, the product of human action and history rather than the invariant result of the body, biology, or innate sex drive.” [1989:13]

Jeffrey Weeks refers to collective or personal “subjectivities” in his strenuous works. Sexual subjectivity, in his words, is “not inborn, pregiven, or ‘natural.’ It is striven for, contested, negotiated, and achieved, often in the struggles of the subordinate against the dominant.” [1989:207] As he goes on, “the sexual only exists in and through the modes of its organisation and representation.” [1995:10]<sup>2</sup> He rejects any approach which assumed the existence of a fixed type of sexual person or regards them as products of history. The effect of depathologisation and reconceptualisation of sexuality and gender<sup>3</sup> through socialism, feminism and sexual radicalism in the 1960s and 1970s is paralleled in the advent of social constructionism. There is not necessarily any connection between sexual behaviour and sexual identity.

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<sup>2</sup> This book was first published in 1985. After that it was reprinted several times. I used the book reprinted in 1995.

<sup>3</sup> There are many areas in which such social constructionism is regarded as being beneficial, and the first of these is in the field of gender.

The impact of social constructionism stems from findings regarding meanings and categories that deal with gender and sexuality in various historical periods and in various types of writing or “language” such as medical reports, religious treatises, romantic novels, political tracts and press articles, no doubt bringing about flux and change. There is a world of cultural and political dissonance. As De Cecco and Elia suggest, since sexuality and gender have been institutionalised, social constructionists believe they are perceived by those who subscribe to them as social and cultural realities. [1993:5] Judith Butler calls this linguistic institutionalised operation relating to sexuality and sex “performativity as citationality.” [1993:14] But Butler asserts that “there is a tendency to think that sexuality is either constructed or determined; to think that if it is constructed, it is in some sense free, and if it is determined, it is some sense fixed. These oppositions do not describe the complexity of what is at stake in any effort to take account of the conditions under which sex and sexuality are assumed. The ‘performative’ dimension of construction is precisely the forced reiteration of norms. In this sense, then, it is not only that there are constraints to performativity; rather, constraint calls to be rethought as the very condition of performativity.” [1993:94-95]

Therefore, in social constructionism the organisation of sexuality and gender tends to be taken into consideration and politics tends to become its main principle. Interpretations and meanings of sexuality and gender are institutionalised. Weeks emphasises that although changing interpretations of sexuality and gender are historically moulded, they are of major importance “in challenging the imposition of arbitrary social norms” [1989:207] and should be defended with passion and commitment. When I retraced the changes of sexual discourse about elderly people in Japan and Britain, I found that four types of discourse are historically constructed; criticism, exceptional, approving and praising (chapters 3 and 4). Each one appears at a ‘later’ point in time, but can occur simultaneously with others – but through the historical periods different



discourses are successively dominant. According to Weeks the sexual subjects, in dialectical relation with such public discourse, will continuously challenge its changing interpretation.

Ultimately, however, like the biological essentialists, social constructionists are prone to assuming and displaying their own reductionism and determinism. This is not to deny the importance of the work of social constructionists. It can be said that consideration of cultural and social construction of elderly people's sexuality has played an important part in deleting elderly people's sexuality from mythology. However, the general history of gerontology – “a commitment not just to understand the social construction of ageing, but also to change it” [Phillipson and Walker 1987:12] – in northern Europe and North America shows that attempts to deconstruct/reconstruct the ageing body based on social construction has been retrenching the possibilities of being old.

An accumulation of pre-existing issues about ageing and the aged became, through social constructionism, the foundation of gerontology. It arose from an acknowledgement that victim-blaming defined the elderly as a social problem and its solution was that the social reality of events like ageing and collective subject-objects like the aged can lie in the linguistic processing of semiotic materials. [Green 1993:38] Depathologisation and fresh thinkings about the elderly has mainly occurred in two ways. Firstly, the rejection of the fixture of 'old age' allowed the average person and gerontologists to apply life-span development theory to elderly people. In this perspective, we observe the desire for great continuity between elderly people's past and present in their basic activities, interests and values. In this way, senile dementia was pathologised as abnormal ageing. Secondly, life course theory was contrived as a revitalised but separate view from life-span development theory. In both theories old age in all its diverse manifestations is condensed as a sequence of life cycle. Ageing is increasingly seen to be a matter of lifestyle

choice. [Amada 1999] However this mitigates the significance of societal forces and broader age consciousness in informing the experience and conceptualisation of ageing and sexuality.

As Meredith Minkler points out, such positions represent an important shift from earlier negative perceptions of ageing which focused on decline and loss. [1996:472] However, overall, in the eyes of gerontologists, the distancing of humankind from nature during the development of civilisation and modernisation receives its analogical counterpart in a distancing from the body. Thus, according to Peter Öberg the history of ideas in northern Europe is “the history of individualisation and dissociation.” [1996:703] The subordinate concept of the body and corporeality expressed in this hierarchical division then makes the body absent from the history of ideas in northern Europe. Biological essentialism and social constructionism dwell on the opposite axis of reductionism and determinism.

As De Cecco and Elia argue, the social constructionist view is, in general, queried if it is intended to protect a minority segment of humankind with their own biological markers from the ignorance and intolerance of the majority. [1993:18] Under the current domination of the social constructionist movement, both in the study of sexuality and gerontology, elderly people’s sexuality must deal with stumbling and grumbling blocks in the road to social evolutionary progress and personal happiness to which the social constructionist view is hooked up. These stumbling and grumbling blocks have to do with the biological fact of growing old.

To provide a basis of elderly people’s sexuality, both biological essentialism and social constructionism bequeath or confront each other with biologically, culturally and socially constructed sexuality. I would suggest the irrelevance of social and biological divisions concerning elderly people’s sexuality as significant reference points. (1) Although each assigns

primacy and agency either to the biological or to the cultural factors in time and space, both biological and cultural factors continue to operate in elderly people's sexuality. Relating to elderly people's sexuality, sexuality and sex should be collapsed at all times into the same basic thing. (2) Sexuality perceived amongst biological essentialists and the populace at many levels is synonymous with youthful physical attraction and the maintenance of youthful productive vigour. Though life span has increased, and some elderly continue with vigorous sexual and social life, legions of elderly people address physical sexual dysfunction, and thus there must be separate bases for the valuation of elderly people's sexuality. (3) In relation to social constructionists' liberation movements and their passion and commitment to subvert institutionalisation, we should delve into the sources of attitudes and behaviours grasping the conditions which mortality and morbidity impel.

A look beyond the positions of biological essentialism and social constructionism may provide us with the opportunity to view elderly people's sexual and sensual fulfilment from a perspective that would otherwise be impossible. This examination reveals two things. Firstly, to detach and shake ourselves free from the permissive distinction between the dominant youth and the subordinate elder, I construe the ageing body as non-malleable, to embrace the meaning, symbolic and cultural construction located in elderly people's sexuality in various contexts (chapter 5). This does not mean conventional, egregious and derogatory implications of such sexuality, as meshed with biological essentialism. In my perspective, quoting Öberg, "the body is dialogic and subjective; a body which 'takes in' other people and gives a direct response to that which is experienced. This perspective also includes the performance of the ageing self through the medium of the socially interpreted body." [1996:704] Secondly, to avoid autonomous discursive and psychodynamic determinism seen in the radical social constructionists' view, the material contexts in which sexuality and gender construction occur and which the analyses of

social constructionism have tended to ignore are introduced. Such analyses are important in listening to noises of elderly people's sexuality within "an ensemble of" [Marx 1845<sup>4</sup>] highly modernised and industrialised societies.

## **(2) Stumbling and Grumbling Blocks**

In a time when people are increasingly tolerant of sexual self-determination in virtually every segment of our population, the majority of us still cling to puritanical ideas in our approach toward sexuality in elderly people. A significant segment of highly modernised and industrialised societies assumes that elderly people do not have any sexual desires; are unable to perform sexually even if they want to; are physically unattractive, and therefore sexually undesirable; are fragile physically and might harm themselves; or that any sexual activity amongst the elderly is perverse. [Kaye 1993:415-416] In contrast to this, sex is given to the domain of young adults. "It is not just coincidence that we never refer to even the most proliferate youth as a 'dirty young man,' but are quick to label any older person who shows interest in sex as a 'dirty old man.'" [Lobsenz 1974, quoted in Kaye 1993:416]

The most well-known claims discounting such common misconceptions about sexuality and elderly people (+ ageing) in northern Europe and North America have been documented in four major studies: (1) the massive (18,000 individual histories) documentation survey of Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues (1948, 1953); (2) the research reports (1960, 1972)

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<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx uses this famous word as a metaphor of a product of social forces.

as part of the longitudinal study of the Duke Centre for the Study of Aging and Human Development; (3) the Masters and Johnson (1966 or 1970) research at the Reproductive Biology Research Foundation in St Louis, Missouri; and (4) the Starr-Weiner Report (1981). Findings by the Starr-Weiner Report indicated that elderly people seemed to define and express their sexuality in quite varied ways; however research and comments on sexuality in the elderly, that is reference to affection, tenderness, love and relationships, is not covered in detail. In large, reports were mainly concerned with the physical aspects of sex, statistics and frequency. [Weg 1983 b:47]

It was in 1983 that Ruth B. Weg edited an important work which defied the prevailing resistance towards accepting elderly people's sexuality. Furthermore the impetus for Weg's problematisation of the ageing body and sexuality was to update important studies which had contributed to demystifying the neuter image of elderly people. She demonstrated that a more accepting societal environment concerning elderly people's sexuality is evidenced in popular printed and visual media. As can be seen in chapters 3 and 4, the results of my own inquiries into popular printed media about elderly people's sexuality in both Japan and Britain substantiate the case that the exploration of human sexuality is present in such media from the 1950s (albeit, at this early time, to a very limited extent), and that this popular printed media has played the same role over subsequent decades in the slow but steady erosion of taboos and myths about elderly people's sexuality.

A point of departure in this thesis lies in the fact that studies of elderly people's sexuality today lack attempts to pursue and envisage its concrete pathway at a discourse level in a broader socio-political context. Academic arguments which stand as an important counter to myths, misconceptions and prejudices about elderly people's sexuality appear to enhance its reification because they lack empirical evidence. Three key facets of sexual discourse about elderly people

may greatly enrich not only academic discourse on elderly people's sexuality but the various meanings regarding being old. (1) The change of dominant sexual discourse about elderly people in both Japan and Britain, seen as evolving along four paths, demonstrates human sexuality and so allows us to forge ties with scientific data, medicine and sexology. I will elaborate these four paths (types of discourse) in chapters 3 and 4. (2) At the same time, we can appreciate that at a superficial level, such change in discourse refer to most basic heterosexual, married and age-stratified gendered relationships, but they could also imply other 'deviant' relationships like homosexual relationship, cohabitation by unmarried, divorced and widowed elderly people and so on. (3) Notwithstanding the change in dominant discourse, implying a move from asexuality to sexuality, asexuality, which echoes a 'critical view' of elderly people's sexuality, has always existed as a background notion. I shall show in chapter 5 that this negative background notion relates to the consequence of marginalisation in the elderly.

### **(3) Sands Permeated into Water<sup>5</sup>**

Discussions and observations concerning elderly people's sexuality have been provided by sociology, physiology, psychology and anthropology, and have tried either to kill unfavourable myths, misconceptions and prejudices about elderly people's sexuality, specifically about sex in old age, or to embrace the potential for sexual expression in the later years and uphold

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<sup>5</sup> This is a metaphor of the relationship between the elderly in highly modernised and industrialised societies and their sexuality in its extreme sense. In this phrase sands are the elderly and water is a highly modernised and industrialised society elderly people belong to. Elderly people's sexuality is like sands which were originally blocks, are to be round and small, then finally invisible but still be in water, being bathed, washed by and flowing in water (which means "stumbling and grumbling").



expectations for its favourable acceptance in the near future. These two currents seek to sustain sanity with regard to body and self (identity) management in later life.

With regard to the first current, the general purpose of Mike Featherstone and Mike Hepworth in considering “mask of ageing” is to study the way in which a hidden youthful self (identity) can be centred during old age. [1991] A contradiction relating to inner youthfulness and bodily age is revealed in this approach. “With aging, the outer body can be interpreted as a betrayal of the youthfulness of the inner self (identity).” [Turner 1995:257] This is one of the post-modern theories in which a false split between body and self (identity) requires “interpolation,” such that choosing not to be old becomes the focus of concern. On the second current, the general purpose of psychodynamic conceptions of masquerade and the use of personae is to study in what way positive meanings are ascribed to old age. A matured inner self (identity) arranges a mask in order to protect genuineness in age-related identities against a hostile outer social environment. Mind-body dualism is much more emphasised in such a model. However, being central to the successful resolution of conflicts against an unfavourable outer social environment, in this model cognitive abilities of masquerade precede the ageing body. Especially, in societies whereby the ageing body becomes irrelevant masquerade with respect to the ageing body is first and foremost “an effort to erase or efface age.” [Woodward 1991:148] Featherstone and Hepworth note that the first approach is associated with trends which include a focus on the fluidity of social images and expectations with respect to a youthful ageing self (identity) in post-modern consumer culture. Simon Biggs states that to understand the nature of the personae concept it is necessary to view it as a development in Jungian thinking of which analytic psychology is the psychotherapeutic practice. [1997:559] In summary, notions of identity (self) management, the status of body in later life, and sexuality as the focal point between them, are novel in highly modernised and industrial societies.

Misa Izuhara explores the changing nature and patterns of relationship between elderly people and the younger generation, with particular reference to the exchange of nursing care and housing assets between older parents and their adult children, comparing Japan and England. Cross-cultural analyses on sexuality in modernised industrial societies in people's later years have shown that structural change in households and their economies reduces the power of elderly people in both private lives and public lives. [Kinoshita 1997] Such structural change in modernised industrial societies reflects a decline in the extended family. Given that both Japan and England have high rates of home ownership the different responses towards home inheritance elucidates the different culture context of traditional family organisation and welfare systems between the two countries. [Izuhara 2002]

According to Izuhara family obligations and inheritance have been more explicitly connected in the Japanese social and legal system, while in England there is neither legal obligation to support older parents nor any constraint on inheritance. Japanese civil law inheritance codes are clearly based upon the principle that certain family members, especially spouses and children have prior rights of inheritance. By contrast the dominant principle under the English system is testamentary freedom. In this pure form, individuals are free to leave their assets without consideration of rights or obligations towards their families. [Izuhara 2002] Traditionally, Japanese parents often fully support their children's higher education and adult children provide nursing care for their co-resident parents. In England, in contrast, there is no legal obligation to support relatives, with the exception of dependent spouses and under-age children. Many Japanese surveys reveal that a significantly high proportion of property, including houses, is exchanged between older parents and their adult children. In England, to fund residential or housing homecare, both the capital and income resources of an individual are



assessed, so that unless older homeowners have passed on their houses to their children, they often need to sell their property to meet the care costs that are not met by the state.

Izuhara notes that, despite the real if some times romanticised inter-generational family values in Japan, 'selfish life-cycle models' dominates household saving behaviour in Japan, in that people save primarily for retirement. [2002:73-73] The exchange of goods and services between the generations has become more explicitly 'contractual' in the past two decades. Japanese families feel less obliged to provide welfare for their immediate members. This arises from the following two emerging contexts in Japan. (1) For the last two decades, both publicly-funded and privately-sponsored supported housing has been operating. (2) Increased levels of financial independence through savings and social security make elderly people more able to support themselves in their old age.

Winn and Newton's anthropological study of sexuality and ageing in 106 cultures [1982] suggests that cultural as well as biological factors may be key determinants in sexuality in later years and that it is mainly in Western culture that the sexuality of elderly people is considered so unusual. But of my own findings from close investigation of printed media in both Japan and Britain are that, even though Japan and Britain have different societies and cultures, trends in elderly people's sexual discourse is parallel in the two countries. Therefore, common major institutions and organisation in Japan and Britain may be proposed as an effect on its own sexual discourse about elderly people, that is, modernisation in highly industrialised societies. In this context, sexuality is described as a focal point which links an individual person with material economic and political matters. "Sexuality serves as an especially dense transfer point for relations of immanent power precisely because it crystallises around the distraction of a natural individual personal mystery all the material economic and political strands which tie the

individual to both state and market, and it is through such material distractions that capitalism clearly demonstrates yet again its ability to confuse us.” [Williams 1975, quoted in Evans 1993:25]

The industrial system’s ubiquitous drive for enhanced, economic adaptive capacity inevitably conjures ‘apocalyptic’ fears, one of which is an abhorrence of the rapid rise in numbers of the elderly population, and the inevitable implications of poverty, disability and need, and for the role of the state. It also encourages the ‘compassionate ageism’ of an earlier era, which portrayed the old as weak, politically powerless and poor, to give way to new (and equally misleading) images of the elderly as a vibrant, powerful and financially secure population group. The elderly, with its implication of both the ageing and the aged, experience the world in which youth-oriented, heterosexual gender norms are operating, and are placed as a marginal group. Rhetoric relating to this marginal group focuses on those elderly who are still able to pursue a mid-life lifestyle, capitalising on the fact that boundaries shaping the definition between the ageing and the aged are quite ambiguous.

Levels of education and health status have improved in modernised and industrialised societies and some elderly people forge relatively high standards of living and health due to long-term political and economic national stability and better social welfare. Whoever attributes negative qualities to physical signs of ageing can reshape and remake its body with machines and technological devices in consumer societies. What Featherstone and Hepworth tried to demonstrate with regard to “mask of ageing” and its youthful self (identity) reflects this in the re-making of images of elderly people. Growing numbers of elderly members of society who can afford to extend their retirement both in terms of sexuality and social productive work have cast the transition of elderly people’s sexual discourse from asexual to sexual. The emergence of a

well-off elderly population, both financially and in health, was in the 1980s, with ageing baby-boomers looking ahead to their own old age, translated into subjective and objective expectations of sexually fulfilled private lives.

There is no doubt that Michael Foucault's *The History of Sexuality: La Volonté De Savoir* [1976=1981] is one of the most crucial books concerning the relationship between sexuality and modernisation. In particular, in connection with his discourse analysis we can gain a different perspective on the study about elderly people's sexuality. According to Foucault, sexual discourse brought about by modernisation in highly industrialised Western societies is characterised by the following three points. (1) An explosion of sexual discourse occurred. (2) The need to identify manifestations of 'sexuality as an objective reality' exists in and through forms of institutional practices and the modes of their organisation and representation. (3) The invention of 'sexuality' coincides with our concepts of sex and sexual subjectivities. There is no determinate connection between sexual expression and its sexual subject.

Subject positions, options for behaviour and even various modes of inner and personal experience and self-identity arise within networks of power as consequences or correlations of their tensions and operations. [McWhorter 1999:74] The human subject makes itself into an object of possible knowledge by revealing the truth about itself deep-seated in inner and personal experience such as sexuality. In Weeks' words, human beings came to be interpreted as knowing subjects, and, at the same time, objects of their own knowledge. [1995:121] This is what Foucault means when he says that sexual discourse is productive (A more open climate for the discussion of the model of sexual repression has helped the articulation of a sexual identity. Dr. Sigmund Freud was to become the leading subject of the sexual discursive model due to his famous psychotherapeutic theory.). What is added to the preceding discussion on modern societies, as

Foucault's word "governability" indicates, is that sexuality is the crafty device aiming to cultivate, discipline and integrate its mass populations into a system of efficient and economic controls through normative infusion into everyday knowledge and experience. Sexuality has elaborated the social well-being of the populations into forms and manners, often seemingly remotely related to biologically based differential in power.

A close examination of Foucault's contributions reveals that in modern times death and morbidity was gradually ceasing to torment life so directly. Modern civil society prodded its populations to extend life and that functioned well, and then mass longevity came about; health improved and more people lived longer. The elderly are to be subject to "bio-power" Foucault argues. "Amid the randomness of death and its fatality; part of it passed into knowledge's field of control and power's sphere of intervention." [1981:142] However, people are gradually questioning: How does it happen that the elderly subjects make themselves into subjects of possible social lives? How much does it cost us to be able to know their social price? Modern civil society brought us extended lives which can not be accommodated into the timetable it has assigned to its individuals.

In general, it is said that Foucault's analysis allows little scope for 'genuine' resistance in any literal sense. This perspective prohibits elderly people and their successors from converting their sexual discourse from asexual to sexual. In Foucault's perspective discourse, scripts, language, sexualities appear in all accounts as the product of, and existing within, the web of exclusionary operations and biologically based differential in power.

We have to attempt to understand elderly people's sexuality's own noises in an ensemble of highly modernised and industrialised societies and to discover their own 'genuine' uniqueness

as a potential complex unity, without being captured by biological essentialism, social constructionism and Foucault's much criticised discursive dominance, though we owe his discourse analysis a lot as our departure point. We must arrange a theoretical apparatus to detect if bio-based differentiations in power obscure elderly people's sexuality's noises and 'genuine' uniqueness. This is addressed in chapter 5.

The apparatus we shall use in chapter 5 is the hierarchical dualism (dichotomy) which originally distanced humankind from nature (and its analogical counterpart, the body) during the development of civilisation and modernisation and which was replicated in very recent history in both Japan and Britain. We can see this hierarchical division in conceptual pairs such as nature versus culture, body versus soul, emotions versus reason, subject versus object, inner versus outer, the Orient versus the Occident, pre-modern versus modern etc. This accentuation of distinctions and dualities became generalised in the definition of the sexual in the nineteenth century and such definitions continued to feed into the development of sexuality. Especially, the fundamental divide between reproductive and non-reproductive sexuality throughout much of the Christian era excluded elderly people from sexuality and sex and elderly people were supposed to be sexless "non-persons." [Weg 1983 b:76] While the elderly have been devalued as the sexual, the younger, especially younger adult men have been valued as generativity, virility and sexual attraction itself. It is well-known that amongst elderly people this differential duality is echoed in terms of contrasts relating to the difference between the sacred, deserving, wise and the ineffective, the discard. The key point is that the change of sexual discourse about elderly people from asexual to sexual does not reproduce this hierarchical biologically based dualism (dichotomy) is evidence that sexual discourse about elderly people from asexual to sexual does not work as "exclusive differential power" [Butler 1993] where peoples are defined in terms of a definite category of sexual identity to help delimit and reinforce social norms.

In chapter 5, confining ourselves to modern societies, we will cite the dichotomies, effectiveness versus ineffectiveness, and autonomous and independent self versus unbounded and dependent and self, as tools to examine the social constructionists' views of elderly people's sexuality. Akira Kurihara argued that in modernisation and industrialisation, the following four modes of organisation formed the basic framework divorcing elderly people from (the images of) productivity, virility and progress; (1) production (the dimension of economy), (2) centralisation (the dimension of administration), (3) privatism (with regard to social environment) and (4) modernisation (the dimension of culture). [1985:26-27] Amongst all of these, production and its analogical counterpart for the elderly, effectiveness, have a superior position in relation to elderly people's sexuality. Needless to say these images of productivity, virility and progress were bestowed on the youth and negative views about the elderly including their asexuality have been maintained in present day (modern) societies. " 'Old' connotes 'incompetence, misery, lethargy, unattractiveness, asexuality and poor health.'" [Öberg and Tornstain 1999:633] According to Foucault's "bio-power," in order to accommodate elderly people's explosive population in highly modernised and industrialised societies, this hierarchical, differential dualism of the youth versus the old has been reproduced in terms of contrasts relating to the difference between the effective elderly and the ineffective elderly. The younger-like competent and healthy elderly are controlled through the creation of the concept of the autonomous and independent elderly and are of great interest to highly modernised and industrialised societies. If we can apply Foucault's theory to the approach to sexual discourse about elderly people, we could say that we shall illustrate a definite formulation of the difference between the youth-like, autonomous and independent elderly and the unbounded and dependent elderly in sexual discourse about elderly people. Chapter 5 explores the integration of its ontological, conceptual pair, posing questions relating to the sexual discourse of elderly people.



As I mentioned above, it follows that in changes within sexual discourse about elderly people in both Japan and Britain seen as evolving through four types of discourse, there are three points which can serve as guidelines for investigation. (1) The change of elderly people's sexual discourse demonstrates human sexuality and so allows us to forge ties with scientific data, medicine and sexology. (2) At the same time, we can appreciate that at a superficial level, changes in discourse engage in most basic heterosexual, married and age-stratified gendered relationships. (3) Notwithstanding the change in the dominant discourse, involving the move from asexuality to sexuality, its premise, which echoes the 'critical view' of elderly people's sexuality has always existed as a background notion.

Regarding the first and second points we must recognise it from the social constructionist view. With regard to the first point, the elderly population are capable of initiating themselves the fresh thinking that reflects changes in discourses, with the soon-to-be-old middle aged as catalysts. However, with regard to the third point, considerations of the incomplete nature of the change in discourses are closely related to the question of the elderly's own unique sexuality. Elderly people's own unique sexuality is beyond social constructionists' reach. We would say that whoever tries an alternative framework about elderly people's sexuality in order to grasp elderly people's sexuality can not fully access elderly people's own unique sexuality. What is obvious is that there is no pre-existing and institutionalised norms and regulatory laws connected with elderly people's sexuality. In addition to this, notwithstanding much fresh social constructionist thinking we might say that we can not either delineate or articulate their own uniqueness and diversity completely. There must always exist a significant gap between the reality and meaning of elderly people's sexuality.

To expand this point, what is most critical, with regard to sexual discourse about elderly people is that the mythology of dysfunction, lack of interest and impotence with regard to the elderly years is still a dominant folklore. The fact that it is not easy to find research on ageing and sexuality that does not suffer from extreme sample bias or the difficulty in getting elderly people to speak candidly about their sexuality should be taken into account. As Pauline Robinson discusses, it is easier to list available problems and feasible research models than it is to suggest an ideal research model for studying sexuality amongst the aged. For example, both cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys regarding sexual behaviour tend to be limited to descriptions of the ageing experiences because convenience, volunteers or even clinics are depended upon. In addition to this, in the case of longitudinal samples, there is apparent bias, because those who survive as subjects through the successive stages of the survey are more representative of the healthy, long-living, geographically stable, co-operative and self-disclosing population. [Robinson 1983:82-83]

However, we can not attribute silence and tenuousness of elderly people's sexuality to methodological problems and elderly people's reserve alone. This question and the third point mentioned above lead to the assumption that the change of sexual discourse about elderly people from asexual or sexless "non-persons" to sexual persons has accompanied a gradual dissociation of elderly people from pre-existing and institutionalised norms and regulatory laws. Elderly people, even though they are called the outcast in societies which they belong to, are able to be willing to prefer being placed outside the range of options imagined by non-elderly people to playing expected social roles. We may dare to refer to this as the freedom of being marginal. Not surprisingly, there is little doubt of the significance that the ageing body is a non-malleable thing that determines elderly people's sexuality. We have witnessed that many other sexual radical movements have inveighed against social puritan norms and that the minority have been sustained



by the dominant values in having politically resisted the dominant values and in strategically reproducing the dominant norms and flexibly utilising them in order to survive. On the other hand, elderly people are unable to express their discontentment and to defy something, in the same way as disabled people. What is most crucial is that they do not need to resurrect old behaviour and roles for pre-existing goals and do not always need social feedback. As Andrews W. McCulloch observed, when human needs and wants become hard to ignore we rely on the status of the individual as defined by the possession of social roles. The loss of these roles as the years pass by therefore leads to the individual experiencing a loss of control. [McCulloch 1981:235] Role loss is precisely what happens in old age, but disengagement may enable elderly people to be out of mainstream living patterns and way of thinking by the reduction of society's control and commitment over them.

In authenticity in later life, we can perceive not only the elderly's dependency and the loss of their strength and dominance marking the admission of death, but also their unique manner and form of distancing themselves from pre-existing, institutionalised norms and regulatory laws and social expectations in managing and co-existing with the ageing body. Although the ageing body does not conform with the messages in highly modernised and industrialised societies, the elderly are in fact more content with their bodies than younger people are<sup>6</sup>. It is generally said that sexuality in old age is the process of reducing bodily freedom and increasing the dependence on pre-existing, institutionalised norms and regulatory laws and societal expectations. However, I interpret it as the process of increasing bodily freedom and reducing dependence on pre-existing,

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<sup>6</sup> Öberg and Lars Tornstain's empirical study carried out in 1995, based on a mailed survey sent to a random sample of 3,000 Swedish men and women aged between 20 and 55 years, reveals that even if the elderly woman's body does not conform with the messages propagated by consumer culture, the elderly are in fact more content with their bodies than younger women are. While men, in total, are generally more satisfied with their bodies and show no age differences in this regard, the proportion of women who are satisfied with their bodies *increases* with age [their emphasis]. [Öberg and Tornstain 1999]

institutionalised norms and internalised regulatory laws and societal expectations. Old age, despite its association with loneliness and frailty and reliance on others for support is, in the end, a liberating experience. Who minds the elderly distancing themselves from social constraints and holding their own kingdom?

Tempting as it sounds as a strategy, the implication of sexual discourse about elderly people is that the authenticity of old age is to dare to stay as the marginal. It is an aspiration of the vanquished; being at a loss, being infirm and being old in discord with institutionalised norms and regulatory laws which highly modernised and industrialised societies urge. Fresh thinking about elderly people's sexuality has allowed elderly people to access the youth-like sexuality in old age, to trace their own uniqueness in terms of contrasts with youth-obsessed sexual conceptions and to clarify their own uniqueness with no relationship with the younger's sexuality. However, I would like to say that acceptance of being marginal regarding sexuality in old age enable us to listen to noises within an ensemble of highly modernised and industrialised societies. Therefore, the fact is that in a time when people are increasingly tolerant of sexual self-determination for virtually every segment of our population, many of us still cling to puritanical ideas in our approach toward sexuality in elderly people, and this will never die because it has circulated in our hate against and refusal of the existence of the non-malleable ageing body and death which result in disarray of conventional norms and regulatory laws. Despite societal hate against and refusal of the existence of the non-malleable ageing body and death we would say that not all elderly people in their authenticity of old age mind being marginal and discovering their own freedom as the marginal.

It is necessary here to state quite plainly that sexual discourse about elderly people today includes the options of its non-progressive images like bed-ridden people's sexuality and senile demented people's sexuality. In sexual discourse about elderly people there are the bodies that

never ever respond to Louis Althusser's interrogation. In Althusser's famous notion of interpellation, doubtlessly crucial to social constructionists' view, it is the police who initiate the call or address by which a subject becomes socially constituted. Althusser focused on stages more likely in our daily life as follows.

We all have friends who, when they knock on the door and we ask, through the door, the question, 'Who's there?', answer (since 'It's obvious') 'It's me.' And we recognize that 'it is him,' or 'her.' ---- Louis Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1974)

At the end of chapter 5 we will see one of the sexual discourses about demented people which Althusser's interpellation does not access even if two sexual subjects ask through a door.

To substantiate the points mentioned above, chapter 2 deals with how research on the sexual discourse of elderly people proceeded, chapter 3 focuses on elderly people's sexual discourse in Japan, and chapter 4 addresses elderly people's sexual discourse in Britain.

## **2 Research on Sexual Discourse about Elderly People in Japan and Britain**

It was by the analysis of sexual discourse that Foucault opened the way in turning our attention to the systems of thinking that people had hitherto taken for granted, when it comes to the construction of self [1976=1981]. As Foucault, whose fundamental argument relating to “subjectivity” still stimulates key debates on the Western self, points out, sexuality is an apparatus to generate the desire of the individual and composes differential power-relations in highly modernised and industrialised societies. He stresses that knowledge about sex (=sexuality) is a form of power and its depiction forces each individual into a hierarchy which is constructed according to standards of personhood; a healthy young adult man is deemed a fully perfect person while disabled people, children, elderly people, and women are excluded to the outskirts of society. Therefore, elderly people’s sexuality has been treated as a dried-up and objectionable sexuality as they are close to death and its process has been thought of as a quite ‘natural.’ Following Foucault it can be said that the change of discourse from asexual to sexual elderly people springs another trap; the representation of the sexual elderly people will be fixed to the social hierarchy no less than that of the asexual elderly people. But Foucault’s comment is not based upon a close observation of sexual discourse about elderly people. In order to show an alternative construction of self in sexual discourse about elderly people I examined about two hundred and fifty general-interest magazine articles published in Japan and about two hundred and fifty newspaper articles published in Britain relating to elderly people’s sexuality. In chapter 5 I reveal its alternative self-construction.

This thesis aims at revealing an alternative construction of self in sexual discourse about elderly people in highly modernised and industrialised societies – alternative, that is, to non-autonomous and non-independent selves which lack self-determination and integration (chapter 3 and 4). As I mentioned in chapter 1 a self-determinable and integrated self, an autonomous and independent self, denotes an ontological conception of self consciousness and self affirmation directly connected to youth-centred sexuality. On the other hand, the opposite concept, an unbounded and dependent self, is also implied with regard to elderly people's sexuality in highly modernised and industrialised societies. In chapter 5 I will underline the non-autonomous and non-independent self which is far from self-determination and integration. In changing interpretations as time goes by elderly people's sexuality is recognised variously as something much like that of other people in younger age, yet also as something uniquely their own which escapes from "bio-power." If we demonstrate the non-autonomous and non-independent self in sexual discourse about elderly people, it is a logical extension to the interpretation of self construction set up by Foucault, and a clue to the picture of the non-self-determinable self in western society.

Britain implies western society in this thesis. This first modern civil society has been a centre of 'the West' over the last two centuries. It founded colonies in non-western countries and its political regime and cultural hegemony have been noted. Connected with this one notes that social and cultural anthropology – a concrete form of views and descriptions about different cultures and societies – emerged in this country. November 20, 1947, marked a new beginning for Britain. The six years-old war had been so grey the Royal Wedding between Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip seemed to signify the world coming to life again. This country embarked upon modern Britain. As I mentioned in chapter 1, in the studies regarding the ageing body in northern Europe and North America, an autonomous and independent self has been

emphasised. However, although in sexual discourse about elderly people in Britain autonomous and independent selves are always first and foremost, sexual discourse about elderly people continues to present elderly people as unbounded and dependent selves as well. Such non-self-determining and non-integrated elderly selves have never been erased notwithstanding changes of sexual discourse about elderly people notably that from asexuality to sexuality.

Japan has tried to adopt a western model since the *Tokugawa* Shogunate was over, the *Meiji* Era started and the capital was transferred from Kyoto to Tokyo in 1868 and accomplished modern civil society. Japan invaded the Korean peninsula and the northern part of mainland China, and the Japanese government and Japanese industry established a puppet government in these places and executed a kind of colonial policy in a different fashion. Moreover, americanisation has been a new national concern willy-nilly since Japan was defeated by the Allied Forces and put under the control of the American Occupation Forces. Japanese culture and society has always been aware of different cultures and societies as well. Japan is a non-Western society. But discourse about elderly people's sexuality in Japan in post-war years is quite similar to discourse about elderly people's sexuality in Britain. Therefore, common major institutions and organisations in Japan and Britain may be proposed as a key factor on its own sexual discourse about elderly people, that is, modernisation in highly industrialised societies.

For the purpose of retracing sexual discourse about elderly people in Japan I used about two hundred and fifty general-interest magazine articles relating to elderly people's sexuality published in Japan from 1945, the end of World War II, to the present time. On the other hand, for the purpose of reconstructing sexual discourse about elderly people in Britain I used about two hundred and fifty newspaper articles relating to elderly people's sexuality published in Britain in 1977, 1987 and 1997. When it comes to a primary resource of sexual discourse about elderly



people, we have newspaper articles, general-interest magazine articles, edifying manuals of medical science and popular literature. A determining factor in choosing general-interest magazine articles in Japan and newspaper articles in Britain amongst these materials is that each of them is the mass media with the largest amount of information concerning the topic at issue in each society.

I adapted my research method from the methodological principles for the study of sexual discourse in Manabu Akagawa's book, *Sekushuariti-No-Rekishishakaigaku (The Historical Sociology of Sexuality)* [1999]. All materials including newspaper articles, general-interest magazine articles, edifying manuals of medical science and popular literatures, about onanism which Akagawa used in his analysis, from the *Meiji* Era to the present time, were collected by him at antique book fairs and libraries all over Japan, especially the National Diet Library, the *Meiji Bunko* in Tokyo University and the Ooya Soichi *Bunko* in Tokyo, and such a research process can be criticised because of its possible partiality. In order to counter this criticism, Akagawa established as a methodological principle the presentation of all materials used in the analysis of sexual discourse so that other researchers can check their appropriate or inappropriate use in the whole deployment of the discourse. I think Akagawa's methodological strategy is effective when we try to recompose the fragmented discourse of sexuality since it has prevailed in mass culture.

I collected my Japanese materials during numerous visits to the National Diet Library, the Osaka Municipal Library, the Ooya Soichi *Bunko*, the Osaka Prefectural Library and the Central Library of Doshisa University in Kyoto (The latter three are especially rich in general-interest magazines.) between July 1997 and November 1997. My sample included the weekly magazines, *Shukan Asahi*, *Shukan Gendai*, *Shukan Bunshu*, *Shukan Shincho*, *Jyoseijishin* and *Spa*, and monthly magazines, *Ushio*, *Aera*, *Gendai*, *Hoseki*, *Fujinkoron*, *Chuokoron* and *Bungeishunju*

(See Appendix for details of these magazines.). Moreover, I listed all authors of books about elderly people's sexuality published in Japan from 1945 to 1999 by checking the annual reference data books and CD-roms, *Toshosoumokuroku* and *Nihon Kenmei Toshomokuroku*, which are said to contain the titles of all books published in Japan. Although I made such strenuous and tireless efforts, I still can not escape from the charge of the possible partiality. Therefore I present the provenance of all materials used in the analysis of sexual discourse as an appendix.

On the other hand, I collected my British materials more systematically during weekday visits to the National Library of Scotland and its branch, the Causewayside Library in Edinburgh, between December 2001 and March 2002. The Causewayside Library, known as the Map Library, officially keeps the highbrows, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer* (the Sunday version of *The Guardian*), *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Herald* and *The Independent*, and the tabloids, *The Sun*, *The Daily Record*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Sunday Mail*, *The Daily Express* and *The Express*. In addition to this, thanks to librarians in the Map Library I could unofficially see the tabloids, *The Sunday Post*, *The Sunday People* and *The News of the World*. Looking from the highbrows to the tabloids made it possible to reduce partiality in the point of ideology and social stratum.

I chose newspaper articles of the year 1977, 1987 and 1997 in order to reconstruct changes in the sexual discourse about elderly people in Britain. This strategic choice was born of the realisation that these times correspond to three specific periods relating to the depiction of elderly people's sexuality; a period of representation of exceptional sexuality, a period of approval and a period of praise. This periodisation was also evident in the chronological research on sexual discourse on Japanese elderly people over fifty years. By chance in a pilot survey in Edinburgh I found there happened in 1977, 1987 and 1997 headline-grabbing events about sex and the elderly



person exhibiting all the most important traits of the respective discourses identified. This relentless and strategical effort enables us to say that reconstructing sexual discourse about elderly people in Britain should escape any possible partiality.

Although Akagawa hung a question mark on the analytical view point of Anthony Giddens, he nonetheless followed this viewpoint in his own work. Giddens delineated sexuality as being free of love and intimacy on the ground that while sexuality is the moment of reaffirming himself/herself love, intimacy, is the moment of reaffirming others [1992]. However, it is highly desirable that we encourage Akagawa's question, that if we, researchers, dare to determine an expanse of usage with no regard to users who supply the meaning we nullify the meaning of research. What is important about research as far as sexual discourse about elderly people is concerned is that it can be seen as a much broader experience than seen from the pre-existing academic perspective. To embrace the meaning, symbol and cultural construction located in elderly people's sexuality we have to change the definition about sexuality in the academic perspective, let alone the academics' division between sexuality and sex. Partly because sexual discourse about elderly people has prevailed in mass culture researchers should recognise their respective partialities in interpreting the meaning of respective sexual discourse. In addition to this, as I mentioned before, in changing discourses as time goes by elderly people's sexuality is to be recognised not only as something much like that of other people in younger age, yet also as something uniquely their own which can not be measured by pre-existing youth-obsessed standard. If we keep this in mind and would like to reconstruct sexual discourse about elderly people as it relates to its users we should not distinguish sexuality and sexual intercourse from love. Thus we seize no less than the truth of the complexity of elderly people's sexuality, filled with sex, love affairs, marriages, sexual intercourse, sexuality, etc.

### 3 Sexual Discourse about Japanese Elderly People

The phrase, *oiraku-no-koi* (literally, “elderly people’s love”), was coined by the Japanese media in 1949 in connection with a scandalous love affair between the sixty-seven year-old poet Jun Kawata and his forty year-old student Toshiko Suzuka. This phrase symbolised the prevalent Japanese attitude towards displays of sexuality in elderly people. Because Suzuka was the wife of a professor at Kyoto University, the love affair would have been condemned as immoral if it had happened today. However, in those days, people considered it to be simply *oiraku-no-koi*, a phrase which does not imply a condemnation of immorality, but a ridiculing of anomaly. When Kawata’s relationship with Suzuka was revealed, he was insulted by the remark that he had come back to the ‘social ball.’ Elderly people who had retired from social life were supposed to have given up their sexual lives as well.

*The Annual Report on Public Welfare and Health* issued in 1997 by the Japanese Ministry of Health and Social Welfare points out that the idea that ageing people have nothing to do with love and sexuality is a myth. It also states that the idea that most elderly people are deprived of their health and productivity and sharpness of mind are misunderstandings. Since the phrase *oiraku-no-koi* was first used fifty years ago, views of elderly people’s sexuality have changed drastically from asexual to sexual. What brought about the change? In other words how has elderly people’s sexuality been concealed, oppressed or emancipated?

Shun Inoue indicates that in the past (at least before World War II), elderly people who have finished with reproductive activities were valued in Japanese society as *kotan*. This word comes from the field of aesthetics in which an artistic technique that has matured and has shed its excess by the passing of time is valued more than a new technique. The word *kotan* does imply a decline of health that leads eventually to death, but it also has overtones of elegance and excellence. However, as Inoue points out, this image of transcendence may have alienated elderly people from their humanity. Valorising this image of the supposed transcendence of elderly people can easily lead to the stigmatising of elderly people who are maintaining their sexual activity as dirty and ugly, thus excluding them from being categorised as human [1992:167]. In present day Japan the image of transcendence is still present, but it has lost its dominance. How elderly people are depicted and categorised reflects the social views of personhood of the time.

When I retrace the changes in discourse in post-war Japan about elderly people's sexuality, I find that I can distinguish four types of discourse according to how elderly people and their sexuality are depicted. The four types are: criticism, representation of exceptional sexuality, approval, and praise. First of all, I will summarise the main points and characteristics of each type. In each type we find particular dominant clichés, stereotypical ideas and images and a fixed logic.

In the 'critical view' of elderly people's sexuality, elderly people are supposed to give up their sexual lives at the same time that they retire from active life. Being old no longer includes the elegant and excellent meaning of *kotan*. Moreover, the sexuality of elderly people who still engage in sexual activity is severely criticised as nasty, unpleasant and disturbing. Those who are unusually youthful are also thought of as extraordinary and abnormal. Ordinary elderly people are expected, even encouraged, to face their inevitable physical decline and deterioration.

In 'representations of exceptional sexuality' of elderly people, elderly people are not always assumed to be asexual. Here, a few elderly people are described as without wrinkles on their bodies and faces. These few are described as possessing youth, health, the ability to work and manage their own lives, and as having a positive attitude toward their future. However, the discourse of exceptional sexuality does not imply acceptance of elderly people in general engaging in sex. The majority of elderly people engaging in sex are not regarded as in control of their sex but as imperfect persons.

In the 'approving view' of elderly people's sexuality, the particular qualities of elderly people's sexuality have totally disappeared. Elderly people are said to enjoy their sexual life in the same way as young people. It is emphasised through the category, human, that elderly people and young people are so alike that it is hard to distinguish the two. In light of this broadened approach elderly people's sexuality is widely deemed as the continuation of the younger's sexuality. Elderly people are represented as in general full of youth, and in most cases their profuse amount of energy is much stronger than that of young people. Along with young and productive elderly people there exist some elderly people with physical shifts that implicate old age, but most people who appear in this discourse are powerful, young elderly people who succeed in having well-organised lives and social activities. Sexuality is seen as having a desirable and hidden effect that makes elderly people into young and well-organised elderly people; elderly people are connected with youth through sexuality. Therefore, it seems more appropriate to say that while a few elderly people with physical shifts that implicate old age exist this discourse widely excludes the phases of the external physical infirmity and frailty that come with old age. The significant reference point of this ideal imagery of elderly people's sexuality should be expressed following two levels: (1) Sexuality reflects our lives. (2) Our lives reflect sexuality. That said, elderly people who have the external physical traits that come with old age

remain in terms of their inner characteristics located within the sphere of the young and of productive elderly people.

Finally, in the ‘praising view’ of elderly people’s sexuality, elderly people who engage in and relish their sexual life are admired. In this type of discourse their sexuality is said to have been transformed in quality as mental and physical changes happen. Elderly people’s sexuality is highly respected because of its progressiveness, historicity, spirituality and genuineness. Their valuable and profound sexuality not only reflects each person’s way of living and life itself, but each person also reflects their sexuality. This sexual image of elderly people is similar to the elegant image of the *kotan*, and we could say that it is the present-day revision of this ideal. The ‘praising view’ does not stigmatise elderly people who are maintaining their sexual activity. However, *kotan* tends to be so abstract that it escapes the difficulties caused by being old, and I shall eventually be saying the same about the ‘praising discourse.’ In the ‘praising discourse,’ as long as the aged enjoy their accumulation of age without any difficulties they are ‘the ageing’ rather than ‘elderly people.’ In fact, in this discourse, the word *koreisha* (literally, “the ageing”) is commonly used to describe elderly people. In short, in a new meaning *koreisha* connotes the young, well-organised elderly people.

I examined about two hundred and fifty general-interest magazine articles relating to elderly people’s sexuality in terms of these four types of discourse. Originally, I sought to elaborate these depictions synchronously; in other words, I considered the four types without regard for chronology. However, these four types turned out to be related to specific periods of time. In Japan the four types of discourse for depicting elderly people’s sexuality can be correlated with the four successive periods: (1) a period of criticism (from the end of World War II to around 1960) – here, sex is depicted as belonging predominantly to youth; (2) a period of

representation of exceptional sexuality (from the first half of the 1960s to around 1975) – here, with sex regarded as part of youth, notions of “youthfulness” are required for elderly people to possess sexuality. Thus some prestigious young elderly people contribute to the reproduction of both life and materials; (3) a period of approval (from the latter half of the 1970s to around 1985) – here, in order for elderly people’s sexuality to be accepted, a discourse giving elderly people’s sexuality the same attributes as young people’s was needed. The category human enabled such a condition, because at the level of human we can say that there is no difference between elderly people and young people, and elderly people’s sexuality came to be treated as the successor to young people’s sexuality; and (4) a period of praise (from the latter half of the 1980s to the present time) – here, elderly people’s sexuality as a mature and developing sexuality is emphasised. Therefore, the sexuality of elderly people is praised as a true sexuality which experiences transcendence in accordance with their lives, and is quite separates from the sexuality of youth.

### **3-1 Discourse of Criticism - from the End of World War II to Around 1960**

When the critical view of elderly people’s sexuality was prevailing, elderly people were reckoned to withdraw from both the labour market and sexuality. The sensational news of *oiraku-no-koi* between Suzuka and Kawata which attracted people’s attention, gives us good insight into the matter, not only because the phrase *oiraku-no-koi* ended up as one of the most intriguing events of the year 1949 and eventually implanted itself in Japanese popular culture, but also because it shows how sexually active elderly people were treated, making it clear how elderly people’s sexuality was oppressed in those days. The beginning of the article Chuokoron in March



1953 describes the related excitement in this way. “*Oiraku-no-koi* has a secure place in mass culture, able to compete with the most highbrow fare served by *Chuokoron*.” It is not too much to say that the case of *oiraku-no-koi* between Suzuka and Kawata represents what and how sexual discourse about elderly people used to be in this period of time.

The article above continues to make fun of Kawata as follows. “Far from leaving financial and political circles to escape shameful accusations [during the war Kawata wrote some poems which supported nationalism and militarism], he [Kawata] still works hard to step back into the spotlight with scandalous confessions. He misses being famous and being made a fuss over.” (Chuokoron March 1953) This shows that elderly people, identified as having given up their sexual lives, were supposed to have retired from social activity. Once Kawata, who was one of the executives of *Sumitomo* Zaibatsu (one of the four large Japanese monopolistic conglomerates before and during the war), was stigmatised as old, nobody allowed him to be a loving creature. “Although there has been speculation that he was likely to kill himself, it is believed that he has simply decided he wants to appear in the national newspapers and magazines with ambitions of a junior high school student.” (ibid, Chuokoron March 1953) This article referred to the possibility that Kawata’s flesh-to-flesh and soul-to-soul love affair is, in fact, merely his self-indulgent show. He asked an authoritative publishing company, The Asahi, to run a series of articles including several of his poems, amongst them *Komonroku* (literally, “lonely hearts”) and *Koi-No-Omoni* (literally, “pain for love”), causing deep-seated suspicion in the public at large.

Kawata insisted his motivation for *Komonroku* and *Koi-No-Omoni* was pure. “Every word of my confession exquisitely puts life into the truth or the true theme of our humanity. There is truly a lot to say about the dark side. Amazingly, there is.” (Shukan Asahi January 2nd/9th 1949)



“When I [Kawata] made a clean breast of my love affair (or my mistake?) I found many people, including my close friends, turned their backs on me trying to distance themselves from me.” (ibid, Shukan Asahi January 2nd/9th 1949) Kawata also wanted to protect his family from any bitter treatment: “I am terribly sorry but I am the sole genetic mutation in Kawata’s lineage.” (ibid, Shukan Asahi January 2nd/9th 1949) In Japan, causing the community to lose face is often seen as worse than the crime itself. This is what the struggle on behalf of sexually active elderly people was all about.

Shukan Asahi went to the effort to explain why they approved Kawata’s request to carry his manuscript, such that we can understand Kawata’s feeling of discrimination.

“It would not be an exaggeration to say that there was something remarkable about the arcane youth of sixty-seven year-old Mr Kawata. [...] If he did not try to pull a snow job [*Komonroku* or *Koi-No-Omoni*] on our readers by pretending to have performed as a tragic veteran, but left a true story as an elderly scholar who nearly put himself to death, we are prepared to deny that publishing his manuscript is a mindless and useless task. Readers are welcome to assert their rights to dare to take Mr Kawata’s works as specimens of social physiology or social pathology.” (Shukan Asahi January 2nd/9th 1949)

An influential author Yukio Mishima commented about *oiraku-no-koi* in an interview with one of the Japanese opinion leaders as follows. “The phrase, *oiraku-no-koi* is about love between an elderly man and a girl. He loves not as an elderly man but as a boy.” (Shukan Asahi March 26th 1950) Just after the war in Japan, sexuality was something that belonged to the young alone. Everyone on Kawata’s side had to look to his extraordinary youth. Even romantic relationships were related to boys and girls and although *oiraku-no-koi*’s original story is about elderly people

falling in love, its true message was a farce in psychology; elderly people in romantic relationships misunderstood themselves as boys and girls and are thus construed as anomalies in “social physiology or social pathology.” In another words, the image of elderly people as being aged and frail forced them to accept retirement from both social life and sexuality.

There was another image, from the 1950s, of elderly people marrying in a nursing home, that helps awaken us to a strong taboo against the sexuality of elderly people in this period. An article in *Shukan Sankei* about a group wedding in a nursing home shows us how elderly people were no longer thought to be sexually active. (November 30th 1958) The story concerns four “stooped elderly couple’s group wedding ceremony,” between a seventy-six year-old man and a sixty-four year-old woman, between a seventy-two year-old man and a seventy-four year-old woman, between an eighty year-old man and an eighty-one year-old woman, and between an eighty-two man and a seventy-six year-old woman. They developed their relationships caring for canaries. “In their ancient-looking faces with many wrinkles, [...] there were deep lines scored down each of their foreheads like the growth rings of tree trunks [...] and yet they frowned.” Although it seemed a happy wedding – “Everybody wished for their long happiness” – the devilish thing is that the description was concluded with “Here was a wedding, supposedly a ‘happy’ one, a wedding celebrating ‘*oiraku-no-koi*.’” *Oiraku-no-koi* could deserve a celebration if it happened in an exclusive place.

A national survey into elderly men’s sexual attitude conducted around this time by a technical official in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare reflects how the sexuality of elderly people who still engage in sexual activity was veiled in secrecy. Though this survey was stimulated by *The Kinsey Report*, the well-known first western survey that proved elderly men’s sexual attitudes as I mentioned in chapter 1, the Japanese report had no specific evidence of

elderly people's sexual attitudes. (Shukan Asahi April 1st 1951) This report, and real or apparent celebrations of *oiraku-no-koi* in nursing homes, suggests to me that elderly people's sexuality has been approved as long as it eliminates sexual intercourse.

A typical statement of this view was made by a film critic in a January 1962 interview in answer to the question about *Kagi* (literally, "a key"), featured in cinemas. Junichiro Tanizaki's highly original story written in 1956, is famous for being the first novel about elderly people's sexuality in Japan. The critic highly recommended the film, but cites a leading actor as the only problematic part of it. He went straight to the point saying,

"With regard to love scenes, especially in sex scenes, an adolescent one is much more agreeable and pleasant. An elderly one is only dirty and terrifying. No reason can be given for this. It has always been natural human sense." (Fujinkoron January 1962)

Elderly people who did not wither up were nothing but nasty, unpleasant and disturbing. There were no other alternatives to elderly people's sexuality, unless it was the peculiar case of *oiraku-no-koi*, or it was a spiritual love in an exclusive place, like a romantic relationship in a nursing home.

### **3-2 The Representation of Exceptional Sexuality - from the First Half of the 1960s to Around 1975**

From the late 1960s in Japan sexuality was deemed to exist in some rare old beneficiaries, namely those endowed with youth and vigour. As long as young people were the privileged

repositories of sexuality, for elderly people's sexuality to be approved, descriptions were necessary that exceptional elderly people are roughly equal to young people, providing a way to make the link between young, productive elderly people and sexuality possible. These descriptions brought elderly people nearer to sexuality than ever before. A few young and productive elderly people straddle both elderly people and sexuality.

A love story between an eighty-five year-old single man Gosuke Yamada and his seventy-five year-old first girl friend and widow Kusamatsu Onagano reflects the fusion of elderly people and young people in sexual discourse during this period. These are extracts from the descriptions about their fateful encounter in the aisle of the nursing home over a fifty-year interval.

“Her [Kusamatsu’s] hands which used to be slender and snow-white turned to be gnarled, her knuckles were as shiny as skinned onions from age and ceaseless washing and farming. His [Gosuke’s] hands which had always felt life tingle in his veins had withered up” – they withered up like old pine trees in backyards.” “She [Kusamatsu] languished. On her upper lip was a grey moustache,” “when he [Gosuke] looked at her, he found it impossible to believe that she had ever been a girl.” “According to ‘her ever gentle line of walking,’ however, Gosuke identified Kusamatsu.” Thus, every time he gazed enraptured at her, “that ‘strange’ old man [Gosuke] who was insecure about his body, surprisingly, sang to her. It was hard to sit still to music like birds singing, hey-ding-a-ding ding, cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo in the sweet springtime! – It was all you could imagine happening between a high school boy with a youthful pimpled face and Mari Sono [one of the most popular idols amongst teenagers in those days] – oh dear, oh dear!” (Jyoseijishin July 8th 1968)

In this description you can find two contradictory statements. These people must have had crooked backs, wrinkled and freckled skin which comes with age. However, despite ageing being visible, their youth was described in detail. In other words, there was the inexorable process of ageing, accompanied by a return to youthfulness. The hunt was on for young and productive elderly people, not for elderly people that are fading, withering.

Elderly people with sexuality were to be described as young, healthy, active, independent and well-organised elderly people, without ageing and frailty. In addition to their youthfulness healthy and independent elderly people were special beneficiaries who contributed to the reproduction of both life and materials. For example, some were elderly men who maintained the ability to produce babies, and others were elderly men/women who were active in business. In the next article Toshiko Asabuki, who is a Japanese specialist in French literature, spoke of those who have a clear and a nimble mind as being young and well-organised elderly people. Interestingly, though this article is about a film in which Simone De Beauvoir appeared, the highlights for Toshiko are where a sixty year-old lady and a seventy year-old lady were seriously talking about elderly people's sex and De Beauvoir herself. Toshiko said:

“Every year our life will be a little bleaker. All the while we are fading, withering, until one morning we will look in the mirror and realise that we are not young any longer. That will be shocking. This documentary gives us insight into what our possible futures will be like.” (Shukan Asahi November 17th 1978)

“What our possible futures will be like” is illustrated as follows: “The lady was strong, with a small, peaky face. No one would ever have described her as a spinster of seventy, which in

fact she was,” and seventy year-old De Beauvoir is still “energetic and agile, with a youthful complexion, and the fast pace that she has always had.”

In this discourse, with ‘exceptional elderly people,’ a physically ageing phenomenon is not noted. This is brought about in instances of elderly people ahead of young people in passion and vitality. Take the next three articles concerning sexually active elderly people as examples. “They finally decided to run away to get married. They had their own vulnerabilities. They [an eighty-six year-old man and an eighty year-old woman] wholly surpassed the young.” (Jyoseiseven June 13th 1973) “Sada-san [eighty-six year-old Mr. Sada] hesitated to propose to her. [...] This is Mie-san [Mr. Sada’s eighty year-old girl friend, Miss Sada] who could not wait for his proposal. Finally, on the 30th of March, Mie-san dared to propose to him. [...] What a brave old woman! They rise above the young or the middle-aged today.” (Shukan Shincho July 4th 1974) The correspondent who described a happy marriage between seventy year-old elderlies as *oiraku-no-koi* said “Brilliant, elderly power [regarding how the elderly couple felt about and dealt with a lot of tough circumstances to be married]! They [elderly people] may even rival young people.” (Shukan Shincho October 23rd 1975)

Elderly people’s sexual relationships are in this discourse only described in the category of young, independent and productive elderly people. The discourse provides an interpretation of elderly people’s sexual desire and ability already prominent in articles from medical science, physiology, and sexual science. Many of these articles related to a lot of statistical data the main points of *Human Sexual Response* (issued in 1966) authored by the reproductive biologist William H. Masters and the psychologist Virginia E. Johnson. As for surveys on Japanese people and sex, field research conducted by a Shinjyuku (a ward in the capital of Japan) district nurse Hideko Daikuhara in a senior citizens’ club (with informants over sixty years of age) and a survey

conducted by *Chanomi-Tomodachi-Sodanshitsu*, the first Japanese dating agency for the elderly in Kanagawa prefectural health centre, were commonly used to describe elderly people's sexuality.

Articles from the point of view of medical science, physiology and sexual science have three common ideas. First, sexuality was demonstrated by the frequency of sexual intercourse and the percentage of people who have any sexual desire. Secondly, because female informants seemed reluctant to answer the questions on the topics mentioned above, the actual results were believed to be considerably higher than recorded. Lastly, the hypothesis that women keep their sexuality at a steady level with age has been put forward because of the high proportion of elderly women showing dissatisfaction regarding sexual desire reported up to the end of the 1970s; from the 1970s on both the numbers of elderly people who have sexual desire and the frequency of sexual intercourse increased. These remarks, went further than turning around the belief that elderly people wither up; they presented Japanese society with statistics that elderly people have the same sexual desires and sexual ability as young people.

However, the issue here is that the sexuality of elderly people was not approved of as much as that of young people: the sexuality of elderly people was considered to have its own 'particular' characteristics. However much healthy and active elderly people's youthfulness was emphasised, their sexuality was never really anything more than something deviant from young people's sexuality. Let me give you an example from a statement of Otohiko Kaga, a Japanese authority on mental medical science. While in the beginning of an interview on over fifteen elderly people's monologues, Kaga commented that "their sexual ability is full of bounce and vigour," he also made the negative comment,



“Not that it matters too much because sexual intercourse is something for the young. They [the elderly] are only concerned about young people’s sexual activity. The nastier, cheaper of it is worrying them. [...] Strong sexual desire based on lusting after bodies is certainly the case in around twenty-five year-olds, whose age is considered to be the prime of life. What is important to elderly people is to learn how to have sexual intercourse at an elderly age, how to form self-discipline, and how to detach any lust. They should do this.” (Ushio November 1972)

In this period of time, sexual discourse threw light upon elderly people’s sexuality. Despite the fact the discourse brought elderly people nearer to sexuality than ever before, you still find that the elderly were not supposed to be the perfect representatives of sexuality, let alone sex. The great change in romantic relationships in nursing homes suggests this. In the ‘critical view’ of elderly people’s sexuality, we can find the implications of elderly sexual intercourse. In ‘representations of the exceptional sexuality’ of elderly people, there is much that would tempt us to say that elderly people in nursing homes are not subjects of sex but incompetent and imperfect possessors of sex. We can conclude that the nature of elderly people’s sexuality was supposed to be different from that of young people’s sexuality.

The change in romantic relationships in nursing homes relating to discourse about elderly people’s sexuality is drastic. Relationships between elderly men and elderly women in nursing homes was no longer romantic. Many articles about “awful” sexual relationships in nursing homes have been printed. In these articles it was reported that relationships between opposite elderly sexes were attributed as the cause of quarrels, violence or murder between elderly people in nursing homes. Let me give you a representative example. Here is the beginning of an article about a murder in a nursing home. “The colour of an eighty-three year-old woman’s *kimono* [the traditional Japanese style of dressing] collar [the collar of the *kimono*, in fact, means *juban* or

underwear for *kimono*] was red. She was only half dressed. So we [three female reporters] could not help but avert our gaze [In Japanese Modern and Middle Ages a red *juban* was worn by prostitutes.]. [...] While we were walking along the passage, we realised that something was different from normal nursing homes. We had detected a faint voluptuous fragrance.”

(Fujinkoron January 1976) It is obvious that from the beginning, the reporters’ curiosity was not directed at answering questions concerning the murder, but at getting materials to support answers which had already been settled in their minds.

The three reporters concluded that the murder “which came about by a series of events” (ibid, Fujinkoron January 1976) was without adequate fair and definite proof. Let us read the conversation of the three reporters in the last part of the article. “In the vernacular of youth nursing homes are a free sex paradise. However they [the elderly] do not hold the same idea of free sex.” “We suspect that to do nothing about elderly sex benefits us.” They laughed at the poor, disappointed elderly sexual persons.

Young and well-organised elderly people who straddle sex and old age enabled sexual discourse about elderly people to change from asexual to sexual during this period. In light of the fact that elderly people are connected with sexuality through a few young, well-organised elderly people, we therefore realise that elderly people’s sexuality took up its meaning and place according to the predominant youth-sexuality-based reference. Being called deviant and isolated is the condition by which elderly people’s sexuality were constituted in younger people’s sexuality. This is what was called the ‘nature’ of elderly people’s sexuality in the ‘representation of exceptional sexuality.’

### 3-3 The Approving View of Elderly People's Sexuality - from the Latter Half of the 1970s to Around 1985

For elderly people's sexuality to find approval, the description required is for elderly people's sexuality to have the same quality as that of young people, thus providing a link between elderly people in general and sexuality. In Japan such descriptions emerged in the latter half of the 1970s. Claims such as "I can't believe the elderly differ from the young in passion." (Jyoseijishin April 12th 1979) were echoed in articles concerning dating agencies for the elderly. For example, the director of *Chanomi-Tomodachi-Sodanshitsu* in Kanagawa prefectural health centre expressed his interest in marriages of the elderly like this.

"Let me show you what they [elderly people] look for in their potential marriage partner. For men, according to priority, strength, charm, beauty, profitable age, good family circumstances, good economic conditions and intelligence. For women, a happy marriage itself, personality, good economic conditions, intelligence, good looks, profitable age and good family circumstances. These results are in accordance with earlier research concerning university students; they prove that the priorities of the elderly and the young people are basically the same." (Fujinkoron August 1978)

Such remarks that "I can not believe that the elderly differ from the young in the basic matters of marriage." (Bungeishunju February 1982) rose from a certain concept. Let me give two examples of this concept. "Differences between the elderly and the young are emphasised too much. As far as we are 'human,' our emotions, pains of new stages, hopes and dreams are common from elderly bachelors to young bridegrooms." (Fujinkoron July 1985) "From the elderly to the young, people are basically the same. When they [elderly people] look at his/her

favourite woman/man in group dating their eyes start to shine.” (Shukan Shincho February 22nd 1990) The category human enabled the attributes of sexuality of elderly people and young people to be recognised as the same. At the level of human we would say that there is no difference between elderly people and young people, and that elderly people’s sexuality is to be treated as the successor to young people’s sexuality. This was the way to make the specific sexual discourse of young, productive elderly people general.

As the category ‘human’ gave good evidence to the fact that the elderly are no different to the young there came forth a wide variety of elderly persons in articles on elderly people’s sexuality. Regarding elderly people as successors to young people implied doubt that deep divisions between elderly people and young people existed. In other words, notions of youthfulness were not always necessary for elderly people to possess sexuality. In an article of the largest magazine publisher Gendai many kinds of elderly people can be found (February 1980). A sixty year-old man “who can afford to drink and play around,” “enjoys sex” with young women, a former seventy-two year-old businessman who “carried on” with his wife “in a kind way,” sixty and seventy year-old “old ladies” “who are fond of sex,” a seventy-four, a seventy-three and a seventy year-old woman who “made love” with a seventy-four year-old resident in the nursing home, an eighty-three year-old “old woman” who “was moving her waist” on the “bedridden” eighty-five year-old “old man,” and so on.

Not surprisingly, these various sorts of elderly person implicated several changes in the description of elderly people in sexual discourse. First, connections between sex and ageing and frailty appeared in such discourse. A following example is about the sight of a group date at a reception desk.

“An eighty year-old man, faintly panting, leaning on a stick, and a scrawny, sagging old woman, with permanent brown spots, like a spotty deer on her ragged skin. A grandma with facial neuralgia like an old trout, and a grandpa with thousands of dreadful furrows.” (Shukan Bunshu November 27th 1980)

So far, this is what we have already seen in the historically previous discourse, ‘representations of exceptional sexuality.’

Most people, however, who appear in the ‘approving’ discourse are powerful, independent and productive, elderly people are uniformly presented as succeeding in well-organised lives and social activities. In light of the fact that old age are the continuation of youth there is often a tendency to depict elderly people collapsed into young, well-organised elderly people. The gap between elderly people and younger people can be bridged in such a way that we first and foremost emphasise their youthfulness, though they have fleck and flection as earmarks of old age. Here is a continuation of what we quoted above in the reception scene of a group date. This example shows us one of the perfect integration between the depiction of frailty and the depiction of youth into one sentence regarding one of the sexually active elderly people.

“Although amid the white powder her dark-brown ancient skin was tired; and this was somehow horrible, far from nasty, unpleasant and disturbing; her face, quite hidden under rouge and powder, was like a lovely daisy in a graveyard. Even her yellow teeth reminded us of a young girl’s.” (ibid, Shukan Bunshu November 27th 1980)

For elderly people’s sexuality to find approval, such that elderly people are deemed nearly equal to young people, a way to link elderly people in general and sexuality was required.

Therefore, in most cases, descriptions of persons who were ahead of young people in passion and vitality, or youthfulness were emphasised. This is the depiction of Hiroyuki Suehiro (In Japanese his surname Suehiro implies the indefinite future.), who is the president and founder of the dating agency *Jyuokai* (literally, “the society of long-lived kings”) in Kyoto (the capital of Japan in ancient times).

“His image to others, as I see it, is that he is a brazen, aggressive young elderly man who has a nearly six-feet-tall enormous body with dark thick hair, which is easily seen to be a fake. Although his outstandingly thick eyebrows like caterpillars and vivid salmon-pink skin reminded me of a sixty-year old man, I was very surprised that I had nothing to say in response his statement, “Ey, I am eighty years old.” (ibid, *Shukan Bunshu* November 27th 1980)

The ‘approving view’ of elderly people’s sexuality brought about a new development in the discourse of elderly people’s sexuality; humanity and universality of sexuality amongst elderly people was the most important element here. At the level of ‘human’ sexuality we would say that there is no difference between elderly people’s sexuality and young people’s sexuality, and that elderly people’s sexuality is to be treated as the successor to young people’s sexuality. While elderly people were full of youth and in most cases their profuse amount of energy was much greater than that of young people, the descriptions that elderly people are full of youth in terms of physical traits are not always required in order to bring elderly people nearer to sexuality and sex than ever before. Some elderly people with physical shifts that implicate old age did exist.

A series of articles named September Sex which was run by the second largest tabloid magazine *Bungeishunju* from 27th November to Christmas 1980, contributed a lot to the discourse giving elderly people’s sexuality the same attributes as young people’s. This



wonderfully written, exhaustive research by a young writer named Shinichi Sano concerns group dating by elderly people, scientific reports on elderly people's sexuality, romantic and sexual relationship in nursing homes, elderly marriage, the sex of bedridden elderly people, and homosexual elderly people. In the view of the 'approving discourse' previous discourse on elderly people's sexuality was unconvincing because it represented elderly people as isolated (confined to nursing homes) and deviant (devalued by youth-obsessed sexual standards). Also the 'approving view' describes the positive social effects (function) from rendering elderly people as young, independent and well-organised elderly people. The new descriptions gave the public plenty of reasons not to ignore the humanity and universality relating to elderly people's sexuality.

On the first issue, the 'approving discourse,' rejecting the isolation of elderly people's sexuality, attempts to expose the inequities of the treatment of elderly people in nursing homes. Let me give you two examples. For attempts to expose the inequities of the treatment of elderly people in nursing homes to become persuasive, it is first necessary to blame the people who are directly in charge of the treatment of elderly people in nursing homes. "Such staff's warped and narrow-minded interest has nothing to do with Victorian-like oppression towards elderly people's sexuality. It is always those who have repressed their own sexuality that oppress others."

(December 11th 1980) Consider more general conditions of framing this attempt to expose the inequities of the treatment of elderly people in nursing homes. We may ascribe the basic conditions to national and local governments. "It is hard to deny that political and administrative short-sightedness and political resistance against efforts to accommodate Japanese society make cramped and depraved views about elderly people's sexuality possible." (December 18th 1980) In 'representations of the exceptional sexuality' of elderly people, deviancy and isolation conditioned the 'peculiarity' of elderly people's sexuality. Thus, in contrast to previous discourse



about elderly people's sexuality the 'approving discourse' shakes up the notion of characterising elderly people's sexuality as deviant and isolated in terms of younger-people-centred social norms and institutions.

As for the second issue, namely the discovery that sexuality has the function of making elderly people into young, independent and well-organised elderly people, there is the following example.

"While I was visiting nursing homes all over Japan I had another unforgettable experience where I could tell which residents were in love or shared the room with others. Residents were briefly, imposing. [...] They framed dreadful circumstances. They were bound to make a strong impression on me. In addition to this, the merits seemed evident in their inner change. [...] An inherent fighter grandpa turned out to be a calm and quiet gentleman, and an evil, grumpy granny turned out to be an absolute kind old lady. [...] The residents who were never able to go to the bathroom or be alone in the dining room were able to get on something by himself/herself soon." (ibid, December 18th 1980)

In the 'approving' discourse "the unparalleled function" of elderly people's sexuality was to make elderly people in general into young, powerful elderly people who succeed in having well-organised lives and social activities. As I mentioned above, required to inject humanity and universality into elderly people's sexuality was both a rejection of isolation and a requirement of making all elderly people into real people. Rejecting notions of deviancy and isolation in elderly people's sexuality underpins the discourse of approval: elderly sexuality was to be treated as normal sexuality. Moreover, the statement that elderly people's sexuality could be very effective enhanced the reputation of elderly people's sexuality. The importance of sexuality or sex to

elderly people was reflected in articles from the point of view of medical science, physiology and sexual science. “At age 70, sex is not a condition of married life but an opportunity to increase happiness.” (Reader’s Digest May 1984) The American survey [Bernard D. Starr and Marcella B. Weiner’s report, issued in 1982] alleging that the quality of sexual intercourse increases as we get older was also often cited.

As to elderly people’s sexuality, many descriptions were provided which laid particular stress on its humanity and universality. The following are part of the article in *Gendai* that I mentioned above.

“When I looked at eighty-three year-old Mori-san [Miss Mori] angry at her rival crying, ‘She stole my boy friend!’ I was awed by her youthfulness which was ahead of her age. Taking into account her age and my age [twenty-seven], I thought her youth was much more admirable and valuable than that of mine. Her profuse amount of energy was also much stronger than mine.” (ibid, February 1980)

“Our sexual desire will not wear off, and that makes us human. Its energy makes us worth living a human life.” (ibid, February 1980)

Elderly people’s sexuality in turn implies his/her life itself. States of ‘being’ allows elderly people to engage in development and personal growth. Chizuko Togaeri who was one of the contemporary key opinion-leaders, upholds elderly people’s living sexuality using the term sexuality.

“As we approach the end of life, sexuality profoundly takes shape, what a splendid thing elderly people’s sexuality is! [...] In comparison to the season of passion which besets us, thrills, and is forgotten by us, elderly people’s sexuality is like a rhyme of the maples, with the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time [...] It [elderly people’s sexuality] is like the scarlet of the maples that should be a valuable pursuit of the “beautifully aged.” (Fujinkoron March 1982)

One of the purposes of this article was to examine the enchantments of *Henyo* (literally, “transfiguration”) written by Sei Ito (issued in 1968). Togaeri said, “While being old, she is still attractive. How wonderful it is that love and sex rise above all things in our past; this works on in us; this happens to us again and again.”(ibid, Fujinkoron March 1982) *Henyo* is about elderly people’s sexuality being something which suggests our way of life and life itself. Here is the defining point: elderly sexuality is the successor to young and middle aged sexuality as a part of human sexuality.

In the latter half of the article in Fujinkoron, Togaeri refers to a well-known book for Noh play [a Japanese traditional art] – *Kurozuka*. The book is about an old demon who lives in a grassy remote, outlying and isolated place and eats disoriented men. Togaeri believed that “there may be helpless grief about withering but forever-green sexuality in poor elderly women living alone in remote wild lands.” In other words, she regarded sexuality as “a flame of passion and desire” “in women’s bodies which have already lost their youth.” The phrase “a flame of passion and desire” or “withering but forever-green sexuality” is the analogy of the message that “I can not believe the elderly differ from the young in their passion.” (ibid, Jyoseijishin April 12th 1979). In conclusion, in the approving view of elderly people’s sexuality it was the category human that

would convince the public that elderly people's sexuality follows naturally, as people get older, from young people's sexuality.

### **3-4 The Praising View of Elderly People's Sexuality - from the Latter Half of the 1980s to the Present Time**

By the end of the 1980s historicity and spirituality in elderly people's sexuality came to constitute an important part of elderly people's sexual discourse. This assumed that elderly people's valuable and profound sexuality not only reflects each person's way of living and life itself, but that each person is also reflected in their sexuality. In addition to that, elderly people turn their reproductive-oriented sexuality into new enjoyable and joyous sexuality and place it in the centre of their lives; this amounts to the transition of their life force. It is symbolised by the story of elderly people's sexuality as life itself. In other words this discourse of praise constitutes the story of elderly people's sexuality as "living."

As an example of the idea that "elderly sex is thus more than sexual intercourse" a specialist on medical care for elderly people stated,

"While the hour of the waning of youth full of passion besets, we have very little to do with the waning of adoration of sexuality, of those who straddle worlds and make of that very experience new spiritual enhancement and transition. [...] To elderly people, these principles are especially real. Some elderly men's impulse to ejaculate against his will was no accident. The fact discloses that our strongest opponent is sexuality which we accompany, cherish, and identify as ourselves through our life." (Ninchi February 1989)

The article of Hoseki in March, 1994 concerned a sex-conscious seventy year-old lady who had superb intelligence. “Although the birth of sexuality seems to result in somewhat carnal pleasure, it does not. It is to find revelation in the things that to us are obvious, [...]. It even subjects us not only to the hunger for the true meaning of manhood/womanhood through our life, but to the prestige of survivorship.”

The estimation that elderly people’s sexuality can produce remarkable creations comprises a part of the story of elderly people’s sexuality as life itself. The spectacular success spotlights his/her way of life and his/her life itself. For example, the article of Hoseki in February, 1996 is about the potentiality of elderly people’s sexuality, and mentioned the first Japanese Nobel prize winner for literature Yasunari Kawabata. Preceding this the writer criticises Japanese society for having deprived civil rights relating to elderly people’s sexuality. “Yasunari Kawabata who loved a girl at the risk of his life could write such marvellous masterpieces as *The Dancing Girl in Izu*, *The Ancient Capital*. He was so sensitive and sensual that he won a Nobel prize for literature.”

In this discourse the function of elderly people’s sexuality makes our life shining and rich; it contributes towards society and increases a new demand for sexuality to be applied to our lives. A stimulating Japanese authoress Jyakucho Setouchi held the opinion that elderly people should engage in sex. “If he can not he should look for a man for his wife. [...] His excuses are always things like that. ‘I don’t feel like sex.’ ‘I am impotent.’ ‘It is natural for elderly men.’ [...] ‘Keep quiet, will you?’ ‘Don’t use lewd words.’ It is as a matter of course. But it is misunderstood. It is a proper desire for vigorous elderly women. [...] Women can have sexual intercourse until their last breath.” (Shukan Post August 24th 1990)

This sort of observation of elderly people's sexuality, that women can have sexual intercourse until their last breath, shapes the definition of elderly people in relation to succeeding experiences of sexuality through their lives. It is evident that there's some similarity between the 'praising view' of elderly people's sexuality and the previous 'approving view,' namely that elderly people's sexuality is the successor to young people's sexuality, as in the emphasis that human sexuality is ever changing its quality; this is seen in the notion that "Our human sexuality changes from a reproductive one to one of sheer exhilaration, and spiritual influence; communal sexuality." (Fujinkoron December 1985) But in addition to this, the praising period suggests that elderly people's sexuality is the ultimate expression of human sexuality encompassing progressive, historical, and spiritual aspects. Elderly sexuality, which covers the highest things to the lowest ones – good to evil, beauty to ugliness, truth to deception, the sublime to the ridiculous and so on – is the supreme "living" sexuality, becoming a value in itself. That is to say, the greatness of elderly people's sexuality is "authentic." (Fujinkoron April 1990)

As for the description that elderly people's sexuality is "true human nature" (Fujinkoron April 1990), let me give you an example. The title of this article is "It is Time to Start Life."

"The way they [elderly people] have sexual intercourse is somehow sneaky. It is time for elderly people to speak out about their tasteful and elegant love. [...] Sex in the 70s, the 80s is genuine, regardless of whether actual sexual penetration occurs. It should be insisted that it is you, elderly people, who can savour sex at will." (Shukan Shincho August 19th 1993)

When elderly people's sexuality as the ultimate expression of human sexuality becomes a value in itself, it is to be called spiritual, something with overwhelming energy, life itself. Elderly people with physical shifts that implicate old age appear repeatedly in 'praising' sexual discourse.

As Kanji Hatano, said to be the first elderly intellect, who declared his elderly sexuality in one of the best-selling books in 1993 *Ware-Oyu-Yueni-Ware-Ari* (*Old Age in the Best of Sexuality*) said, “It was wrong to connect sexuality with reproduction, sexual intercourse itself.” (Shukan Kinyobi September 9th 1994) Elderly people’s mental sexuality is opposed to sexuality with penetration, young sexuality. When elderly people are to be expected to have their own sexuality the emphasis on youthful appearance is not always required: in this discourse about sexuality old age stays as a feature of elderly people.

This sexual image of elderly people is similar to the elegant image of the *kotan*, and tends to be idealised, escaping from the difficulties that come with age like decay in health and a conflict between what he/she used to be and what he/she is. In this discourse, praise of elderly people’s sexuality is explicitly voiced in terms of “*koreisha*,” ageing people who are supposed to possess this spiritual sexuality. As the next example shows, elderly people are deemed to enjoy their accumulation of age without any difficulties.

“Yamamoto-san [the seventy-two year-old old man Mr. Yamamoto] falls in love and wants sex to show off his liveliness. They [elderly men who engage in sexual activity like Mr. Yamamoto] believe that sexuality is life itself! They just want to feel that they are alive. Actually they want neither sex nor the women’s flesh. It is the only way they could prove they had any value. All they want is to make sure that they are living with contact and interaction with someone.” (Hoseki October 1992)

Even if spirituality is the essence of the praising view of elderly people’s sexuality, it contains in most cases “liveliness” as well. In some of the following articles elderly people who



have maintained their sexual activity are distinguished from those who are demented or unable to leave his/her bed.

“Nobody can stop the proportion of elderly people increasing in Japan. And the number of elderly people who are suffering regarding their sexuality is also increasing. [...] How on earth do they deal with it? If they can not cope with it they will be forced to remain the poor ‘silver sex’ who linger about. It is inevitable that we grow older. Nobody knows who is to be either demented, bedridden or silver sex. All we have to do is prepare our minds and sexuality for old age.” (Hoseki May 1988)

“When we take ‘the aged society’ as a social problem we often take the young as the formulation, and the ageing as demented, bedridden and socially weak people. While we think it is quite natural for them to wither up, we treat those who engage in sexual activity as nasty, unpleasant and disturbing ‘filthy crocks.’ [...] It is clear that we can not ignore elderly people’s sexuality when facing elderly people’s problems. As long as their sexuality is neglected there will be a high cost to pay.” (Spa May 15th 1996)

As in the ‘exceptional’ and ‘approving’ discourses, in the ‘praising view’ of elderly people’s sexuality, those who are estimated to have supreme sexuality are lusty young and independent elderly people who succeed in well-organised lives and social activities. On the other hand the praising discourse, along with articles from the point of view of medical science, physiology and sexual science, emphasises the qualitative change in elderly people’s sexuality, marking it out as different from younger people’s sexuality. This suggests, as I noted already, that elderly people are able to enjoy their accumulation of age without any difficulties, even though

they have the external physical traits that come with old age. Elderly people remain located within the sphere of young and productive elderly people in terms of their inner characteristics.

Let us check this point using an article in which elderly people who have the external physical traits that come with old age appear. When Atsuko Anzai, the writer of the *Hana-Aru-Kisetsu* (literally, “The Time Full of Flowers”), wrote about her elderly mother’s sexuality she was careful in her choice of words regarding elderly people and ageing uniting the two in one paragraph.

“Elderly people are unpleasant. Wrinkles and permanent brown spots on their skins and faces increase steadily, raven hair turns grey or white, and their physical strength declines. When we see an elderly woman wear heavy makeup and try to attract men’s attention, our stomachs turn, and we are left shivering. It is when they enjoy love in the same way as young people that they are avoided like a plague. It is not suitable for the *koreisha* to kindle the flame of love again, or to try to attract the opposite sex. There should be love for each age: love for the young, love for the middle-aged, and love for the elderly. [...] I believe love affairs beyond beauty or ugliness exist amongst elderly people.” (ibid, Shukan Kinyobi September 9th 1994)

During this period ‘praising discourse’ asserts that elderly people’s sexuality is spiritual through transcendence, enabling elderly people (= the ageing) to “look forward to old age, the flower of our life time.” (ibid, Shukan Kinyobi September 9th 1994) There exist two opposite assumptions: the first is bound up in the image that elderly people’s sexuality is the successor to young people’s sexuality, continuously drawn out by well-controlled accumulation of age from young to old; and on the other hand there is the image of transformation in quality to engage something profound in human life. This alone is sufficient justification to distinguish the praising

view of elderly people's sexuality: "the flower of our sexuality keeping time." The appreciation of elderly people's sexuality as "the flower of our sexuality keeping time" has noticeable overtones of elegance and excellence where passing time brings a decline of health and death, like the image of *kotan*. But it is free from prestige ideals which the image *kotan* can not escape. Whereas *kotan* implies self-complacency as the complete elderly people's image, the appreciation of elderly people's "the flower of our sexuality keeping time" connotes general rules or principles which offer innumerable metaphors regarding the "withering up" of Japanese society as a whole, without a holy image of elderly people. That is to say, elderly people's sexuality calls for a critical look from microcosmos to macrocosmos.

At the beginning of this chapter I asked about the social causes of the change in discourses about elderly people's sexuality. Since, in the next chapter I will be revealing similar changes in elderly people's sexuality in Britain. I will leave answering the question until chapter 5.

## **4 Sexual Discourse about British Elderly People**

As I mentioned in chapter 2, I chose newspaper articles of the year 1977, 1987 and 1997 in order to delineate changes in the discourse of elderly people's sexuality in Britain. This strategic choice was born of the realisation that these years were best examples of three specific periods of time category in depictions of elderly people's sexuality: a period of representation of exceptional sexuality, a period of approval and a period of praise. This was a need which existing chronological research on sexual discourse of Japanese elderly people over fifty years was well equipped to meet. By chance in a pilot survey I found that in 1977, 1987 and 1997 there happened three headline-grabbling events exhibiting all the most important traits relating to the period of time category. In this chapter I will summarise particular dominant clichés, stereotypical ideas and images of the respective discourses; then I introduce the headline-grabbling events for each period.

Some will want to find out the differences between British elderly people's sexual discourse and Japanese elderly people's sexual discourse. If I dare to meet the demand I raise the following five points arising from the newspaper and magazine articles I read: (1) The British have more articles featuring celebrities than the Japanese. (2) In comparison with the British the Japanese seldom see articles about elderly rapists and elderly victims of sexual assault. (3) In 1977, 1987 and 1997 I could find few British newspaper articles relating elderly people's sexuality to nursing homes. (4) In contrast with Japan in Britain the topic of dating agencies for

elderly British men and younger brides from south-east Asia or east Europe more often came up for discussion than the topic of dating agencies for elderly male and elderly female Britons. (5) In 1977, 1987 and 1997 in the British articles I could find few articles written from the main points of view of medical science, physiology and sexual science.

However, much more significantly you stare at the great similarity between British elderly people's sexual discourse and Japanese elderly people's sexual discourse in this chapter. Thus it will be seen that my discussions and descriptions are subject to a methodological framework and dominant-idioms which the discussion of Japanese sexual discourse of elderly people provided in advance. In this chapter I will accordingly use similar turns of phrase as in the previous chapter.

In contemporary newspaper articles there are allusions to a period of 'criticism' regarding British sexual discourse about elderly people, pre-dating 1970. That is, elderly people were supposed to give up their sexual lives at the same time that they retired from social life, the sexuality of elderly people who still engaged in sexual activity was severely criticised as nasty, unpleasant and disturbing.

"Three decades later, the oldest swinger in town is still cheerfully causing offence with enthusiastically-espoused views that are anathema to many." (The Express January 30th 1997)

This article indicates that in 1967 "the oldest swinger in town" whose sexuality was not confined to spiritual love in exclusive places, like romantic relationships in nursing homes, was nothing but nasty, unpleasant and disturbing.

Also, pre-1970, elderly people were expected, even encouraged, to face their inevitable physical decline and deterioration.

“That changed for me when I had my second flash of carnal revelation. I [the speaker is almost into her fifties] was in my 30s and had just emerged from acute sleep deprivation, loss of hair and general below the waist mechanical failure – otherwise known as having a baby. A friend gave me an article to read. ‘There’s never any let-up,’ she said breezily.” (The Daily Mail November 21st 1997)

This article explicitly tells us that in the second half of the 1960s middle-aged female Britons were supposed to start to be sexually inert. Thus, we can easily imagine that in the second half of the 1960s elderly female Britons suffered from societal anathema that elderly people should be dried up. Indeed this discourse, even though it’s generally overlaid by other discourses, continues to have a contemporary relevance.

#### **4-1 The Representation of Exceptional Sexuality in 1977**

In 1977 in Britain sexuality was deemed to exist in some rare old beneficiaries, namely those endowed with youth and vigour. Young people were the privileged ones who were allowed sexuality, so for elderly people’s sexuality to be approved, descriptions that exceptional elderly people are roughly equal to young people provided a way to make the link between young, productive elderly people and sexuality possible. These descriptions brought elderly people



nearer to sexuality than ever before. A few young and productive elderly people straddle both elderly people and sexuality.

What came as a shock to a commentator of The Daily Mail on the engagement between the national hero football manager Malcolm Allison called Big Mal and his twenty year-old model Serena Williams was to learn that “Our Hero is 50 this year. (Cartoon heroes never age, do they?)” (The Daily Mail February 21st 1977) Even though Big Mal put a stop to the long-lasting relationship with his sick wife, there was no condemnation at all. “We’ve just finished the adventure entitled ‘Will Big Mal and Loyal Beth, his Long-Suffering Wife, Find True Happiness at Last?’ Answer [original] is, of course, no. We’re now into ‘Will Big Mal and Sexy Serena Make It to Orange-Blossom Time?’ (Yes, on May 23, after the Cup Final.)” (ibid, The Daily Mail February 21st 1977) Instead of holding a debate on his immorality the female commentator paid attention to his normality. “And somehow I’d expected Big Mal to look like a cross between a Yeti and a beer truck. Not so, dear fans, he looks *quite normal* [her emphasis]. In fact Big Mal, electrician’s son from Kent, and Sexy Serena, naval officer’s daughter from Devon, are thoroughly unpretentious and ordinary.” (ibid, The Daily Mail February 21st 1977)

In this description you can find the particular way both external and internal youthful characteristics oriented elderly people toward “normality.” Elderly people who exceptionally engaged in sexual activity were deemed ordinary. Sexually active elderly people were said to never age. They must in reality have crooked backs, wrinkled and freckled skin which comes with age. However, despite this being visible, their youth was described in detail. In other words, there was the inexorable process of aging, accompanied by a return to youthfulness. The hunt was on for young and productive elderly people, not for elderly people that are fading, withering.

Sexually active elderly people were to be described as young, healthy, active, independent and well-organised elderly people, without ageing and frailty. In addition to their youthfulness healthy and independent elderly people were special beneficiaries who contributed to the reproduction of both life and materials. For example, some were elderly men who maintained the ability to produce babies, and others were elderly men/women who were active in business. “It is not only the young folk that have the fun these days. I heard that the 78-year-old Marquis Camden is poised to propose to the woman he has fallen in love with – Group Captain Peter Townsend’s 55-year-old first wife Rosemary de Laszlo.” (The Daily Express November 23rd 1977) “With all the ardour of a young poet’s words, 90-year-old Tom MacDonald again pledges his love to Agnes. [...] [...] And their love for each other has been their mainstay.” (The Daily Record February 5th 1977) The eighty-one year-old widower David Cook who was going to celebrate a marriage with the sixty-nine year old widow Margaret Cowan, making people jealous of his youthfulness, complained about cancelling his golf. “Despite his years, he plays three rounds each week.” (The Daily Record September 17th 1977) “I [the seventy-one year-old Lizzie who would marry her seventy-four year-old lollipop man Chic Anderson next day] feel like a teenage bride all over again.” (The Daily Express January 21st 1977) In sexual discourse about elderly people healthy, active, and independent elderly people with exceptional youth were replacing elderly people with physical and mental difficulties which come with age.

In this discourse, with ‘exceptional elderly people,’ a physically ageing phenomenon is not noted. This is brought about in instances of elderly people ahead of young people in passion and vitality. Take the next three articles concerning sexually active elderly people as examples. “Somehow we [a twenty-four bride who would marry a forty-one year-old TV director] both feel the same age.” (The Daily Express February 24th 1977) “The lady who owns these sensational legs is 54 years old. [...] Her legs and 34-23-34 figure would still do credit to a girl of 25.” (The

Sun September 19th 1977) Then here is the extract from the conversation between The Daily Mail commentator and Big Mal's fiancé Serena. "She [the girl over twenty years bridegroom's junior] says, batting her huge eyelashes, I'm a tough cookie I admit it. But Malcolm's an even tougher cookie than me." (ibid, The Daily Mail February 21st 1977)

Elderly people's sexual relationships are in this discourse only described in the category of young, independent and productive elderly people. The discourse provides an interpretation of elderly people's sexual desire and ability already prominent. Although the number of the British articles I collected from the point of view of medical science, physiology, and sexual science is few, they supported that elderly people have the same sexual desires and sexual ability as young people, without exception, in 1977. "It is perfectly true that a happy and active sex life is possible for many men and women over 60 or even 70 or 80. But there is no medical evidence that any particular healthy regime will help achieve this." (The Sunday People April 10th 1977) This remark went further than turning around the belief that elderly people wither up, and presented British society with fact that elderly people have sexual desires and sexual ability.

However, the issue here is that the sexuality of elderly people was not approved of as much as that of young people: the sexuality of elderly people was considered to have its own 'particular' characteristics. However much healthy and active elderly people's youthfulness was emphasised, their sexuality was never really anything more than something deviant from young people's sexuality. Let me give you three examples.

Anne Cumming told Sandy Fawkes of her first book *The Love Habit*, an autobiography about "a sexually dynamic grandmother living in Rome who, having been discarded by two husbands and a longterm lover [...], decides to give up looking for Mr Right and plump for

numerous young Mr Nows.” (The Guardian September 7th 1977) Anne insisted: “Some have even thought it might be the fantasising of an old sex-starved woman but all of the young men in the book are real, most of them insisting that I use their names.” (ibid, The Guardian September 7th 1977) At first glance it seems a sort of heroic story but their dialogue reveals how much love affairs with young men have weighed down on her.

“In fact I took to having lots of young lovers, because I had [original] been hurt so much. It was while I was crving [original] on the shoulder of a really sweet friend who pointed out that I was too independent, that I was difficult to handle, and that I used relationships as a power battle, that I determined on the primrose path.” (ibid, The Guardian September 7th 1977) Primroses suggest both youthfulness and sorrow.

Sandy Fawkes suggested that Anne’s traumatic experiences drove her towards young lovers. “Did she ever think that her use, almost exploitation, of young men could be revenge for the hurt she had received when young?” (ibid, The Guardian September 7th 1977) Sandy Fawkes gave her article a subtitle: “Anne Cumming tells Sandy Fawkes of the journeys with the boys along the primrose path.”

Second, seventy-seven year-old Mrs. Ray Goodman was prevented from getting married with her twenty year-old step-grandson Mark Goodman, and what the public were interested in was asking “if the couple would have normal sexual relations.” (The Guardian December 10th 1977) Mark answered to “the inevitable question.” “When there is deep love there’s no need for sex. [...] I’m quite capable, but I don’t think it would be ... what’s the word ... suitable.” (The Daily Mail December 10th 1977)

Third, a psychiatrist had diagnosed forty-seven year-old John Robinson who stabbed a nine year-old scout cub to death in 1962, and stabbed and mutilated his twenty-five year-old niece to death after having been freed from jail as a “sadistic sexual deviant for whom there was no treatment.” The psychiatrist reported to the court that “He will remain a source of danger to the public until the ageing process takes away his sexual drive.” (The Sun January 25th 1977)

In this period of time, sexual discourse threw light upon elderly people’s sexuality. Despite the fact the discourse brought elderly people nearer to sexuality than ever before, you still find that the elderly were not supposed to be the perfect representatives of sexuality, let alone sex. The next four examples suggest this. In representations of the exceptional sexuality of elderly people, there is much that would tempt us to say that elderly people are not controllers of sex but incompetent and imperfect possessors of sex. We can conclude that the nature of elderly people’s sexuality was supposed to be different from that of young people’s sexuality.

President of the High Court Family Division in London refused fifty-seven year-old Mrs. Joan Atly’s claim for financial provision from her sixty-five year-old husband who was said to be “coarse and insensitive – ‘particularly in his approach to sexual intercourse.’” “The judge said: ‘In fact he was a normal husband and she flatly refused him throughout the time they were together.’” (The Sun March 12th 1977) The title of the article in The Sun is “Wed to a Woman of Stone.”

Second, Linlithgow Sheriff Court banned sixty-six year-old pensioner John Campbell from forcing his sixty-seven year-old ex-wife Catherine Race to have sex with him. “Miss Race” and Campbell lived together until last October after her second marriage ended in divorce. “Miss Race” who said: “I told him I thought sex was dirty” in the Court was granted an interim interdict.

(The Daily Record March 10th 1977) In a very similar case reported the next day, under the headline reporting that “Court Bans Pensioner in Sex Clash” (ibid, The Daily Record March 10th 1977) The Daily Record presented an interview with a sixty year-old widow saying: “I haven’t had sex in 10 years, since my husband died. And I can’t say I miss it. I was never all that interested. I can’t really be bothered much with men. If I get married again it’ll just be companionship. I think there’s a lot of women like me – they’re quite happy for their husbands to be getting it elsewhere.” (ibid, The Daily Record March 10th 1977)

Third, seventy-six year-old pensioner Tommy Newman attacked his forty-three year-old girlfriend Mrs. Mary Walker when she refused to have sex and was jailed. The Glasgow Sheriff Court admitted that Tommy showed very little signs of age. The Sheriff Peter McNeil said: “I have to balance the nature of the offence with the character of the accused.” (The Glasgow Herald February 8th 1977) Even the defence lawyer was surprised at his subversive conduct. “It is incredible that after a blameless life he should appear twice in a year for assault.” (ibid, The Glasgow Herald February 8th 1977) Newman, who had a previous conviction for assault when he was seventy-five years old, was remanded in custody for reports. (The Scottish Daily Express January 19th 1977) The Express staff reporter began his article as follows. “At 76 Tommy Newman has still not lost his appetite for love-making. But it was his virility that landed him in court yesterday.” (ibid, The Scottish Daily Express January 19th 1977)

Fourth, a thirty-four year-old man who tried to rape a seventy-two year-old crippled widow was blamed not for the atrocious deed which he committed but for his “abnormal sexual appetite.” “Lord Wheatley said it was a ‘vicious and violent assault to satisfy his abnormal sexual appetite.’” (The Daily Express May 7th 1977) “Lord Grieve jailed him [the young rapist] for



three years and said there were peculiar features to this ‘quite disgusting crime’ and because of this he was being lenient.” (The Glasgow Herald February 25th 1977)

The last example is crucial. Newspaper publicity, and the court, sympathised with not a poor, disappointed elderly person but a young rapist.

Young and well-organised elderly people who straddle sex and old age enabled sexual discourse about elderly people to change from asexual to sexual during this period. In light of the fact that elderly people are connected with sexuality through a few young, well-organised elderly people, we therefore realise that elderly people’s sexuality took up its meaning and place according to the predominant youth-sexuality-based reference. Being called deviant and isolated is the condition by which elderly people’s sexuality were constituted in younger people’s sexuality. This is what was called the ‘nature’ of elderly people’s sexuality in the ‘representation of exceptional sexuality.’

### **“Love Affair between Lady of the Manor Violet Salmon and Sergeant Kenneth Davies”**

The High Court in London granted “the last wish of a lonely old widow who fell head-over-heels in love with a village policeman” on the 6th of April this year. (The Daily Mail April 7th 1977) The bitter legal battle over the will had been a centre of attention in British newspapers since the beginning of the year. A colonel’s widow and lady of the manor, Mrs. Violet Salmon’s will, made three months before she died in November 1973, aged eighty, was contested by a distant cousin Christopher Shapland and four charity organisations. They were all beneficiaries in a 1971 will which gave the fifty-two year-old police sergeant Kenneth Davies, a married man with



two grown-up children, only a sixth of the fortune of 240,000 pounds. The beneficiaries of the previous will claimed that she was not of sound mind, and was suffering from delusions when she made the last will.

However from the beginning questions about whether Mrs. Salmon was in love with Sergeant Davies or not and whether Sergeant Davies wormed his way into Mrs. Salmon's affection in order to obtain her money or not have made Sergeant Davies an easy target. Love letters from Mrs. Salmon to Sergeant Davies written when she was in her late seventies were read out in the High Court.

In representations of the exceptional sexuality of elderly people, a few elderly people are allowed to possess youth, health, and the ability to work and manage their own lives. These elderly are described as being ahead of young people in passion and vitality. The couple met in 1970 when Mrs. Salmon, then seventy-seven, lived in a remote, sixteen-bedroom mansion, Tewkesbury Park, set in five hundred acres of countryside. The court was told that "despite the difference in their ages, they had a lot in common." (The Sun January 25th 1977) The Judge said it was the seventy-seven year-old lady of the manor who cast a spell on and allured the police sergeant and he was captivated by the colonel's widow. "He was trapped in the aura of Mrs. Salmon as the rabbit is trapped in the headlights of an approaching car." (The Daily Record April 7th 1977) The widow falling in love with the policeman was sexually voracious. It was reported that Mrs. Salmon would draw the sergeant to her, fondle his hand, and kiss him, even in public. Sergeant Davies gave evidence that her energy enabled her to compete with the sergeant in his fifties even or less than fifty year olds. "You might as well tell the rabbit to move out of the path of the car – psychologically it [to resist her or her hand] was just impossible." (ibid, The Daily Record April 7th 1977) "In conversation she was faster than I and much more eloquent. I felt

there was a master and pupil relationship.” (The Daily Telegraph January 27th 1997) The article by The Guardian on the 29th of January 1977 put down Mrs. Salmon as “like a young girl going through a teenage love affair.”

However, despite the elderly person’s youthfulness being emphasised, the discourse representing exceptional sexuality did not imply acceptance of the sexual contact. At first glance, sexually active elderly people were regarded as nasty, unpleasant and disturbing. Sergeant Davies was said to “return her love, though not in any sexual sense.” Thus it is noticeable that British publicity including the High Court has not associated their love affair with carnal relations. Indeed, the High Court Judge, by proxy British publicity, interpreted the sergeant’s “complete sense of admiration – near to a adoration” for Mrs. Salmon. (ibid, The Daily Record April 7th 1977) “He [Sergeant Davies] was so fascinated by her that ‘it was still possible to see the adoration shining out of his eyes, as he gave evidence,’ said the judge.” (ibid, The Daily Mail April 7th 1977) When Sergeant Davies turned to the subject of sensuality the High Court Judge permitted a spiritual interpretation to be put on it. “On one occasion when she could not stoop to wash her feet, he washed them for her. The symbolism is there.” (ibid, The Daily Record April 7th 1977) Although evidence had been given that Mrs. Salmon said that she had had sexual intercourse with the sergeant the Judge denied it to be possible from the medical science point of view.

#### **4-2 The Approving View of Elderly People’s Sexuality in 1987**

For elderly people's sexuality to find approval, the description required is for elderly people's sexuality to have the same quality as that of young people, thus providing a link between elderly people in general and sexuality. The category human enabled the attributes of sexuality of elderly people and young people to be recognised as the same. At the level of human we would say that there is no difference between elderly people and young people, and that elderly people's sexuality is to be treated as the successor to young people's sexuality. This was the way to make the specific sexual discourse of young, productive elderly people general.

This is the claim in the following message; "Couples [...]are proving that age is no barrier to that old lovin' feelin'. [...] But the generation gap isn't concerning Des [the fifty-five groom Des O'Connor], as he plans his romantic wedding in the Spanish sunshine. For, like others, equally well-known, he's young at heart. [...] their 30-year age-difference will not be mentioned anywhere in the ceremony." (The Daily Record February 27th 1987) In contrast to the 'approving discourse' previous discourse on elderly people's sexuality did not allow elderly people in general to possess the youthful factors of sexuality in old age. In previous discourse on elderly people's sexuality it is a few young, well-organised elderly people who connected elderly people to sexuality. In 1987 the connotation covering adolescence through old age in sexuality can be construed as the category human.

A similar example is from a female correspondent who has keen eye on social affairs.

"I never thought I would live to see it: a recent obituary in this newspaper which ended with the words, 'He is survived by his girl-friend and their adult son.' This raises some interesting questions. At what age does a girl become a woman or a woman cease to be a girl? And if her son is grownup she must surely be quite a big girl by now? Could the son still be

described, in spite of his adult years as a ‘love child’? (And if so, would the product of a regular union be, by analogy, a ‘habit child’?) All this is, of course, current usage, and not only in the press. I have heard women of mature years, who would not by any stretch of the imagination have described themselves as ‘girls,’ introduce some frail old gentleman as ‘my boy-friend.’ So how else could the obituary-writer have put it? Well, only a couple of generations ago he would have written merely, ‘He was unmarried.’ The presence of a bastard son would have been unmentioned and unmentionable.” (The Daily Telegraph September 16th 1987) This article demonstrates that elderly people who have youthful sexual relationships “in mature years” were to be accepted in large in British society in 1987.

Here is another example. “Who would ever have dreamt that Having It All would include a flotilla of middle-aged bridesmaids in long dresses? Of course, times have changed, with women putting career before marriage, but what apparently has not altered is every ‘girl’s’ dream of a Cinderella white wedding with all the trimmings, perhaps even more than once. No biological clock ticking on that dream, never mind that bridesmaids these days can turn out to be as old as the wicked stepmother.” (The Daily Telegraph September 2nd 1987) In this article the term “all” including traditional young Cinderella-like girls to Cinderella’s elderly-stepmother-like people allows every female persons of any age to dream of being a Cinderella. The term “all” implies the category human as well. Let me give you two more examples of this concept.

The actress Barbara Windsor, when called a cradle-snatcher, made a statement against “Knockers” who said that her marriage to her toy boy lover would not last. “At her age – coming up 50 – she should be getting a good night’s sleep, [...] instead of going to bed with a 29-year-old. [...] [...] Gawd! It’s all right for a man to have a younger woman, even if she’s young enough to be his daughter, but it’s not considered right if it’s the other way round. [...] [...] A lot

of people live together because it's convenient. They want to have it off and don't want to get out of bed afterwards and go home." (The People April 19th 1987) Barbara Windsor did not hesitate to challenge one of the strongest taboos – sexual relations between elderly female Britons and much younger male Britons. To nullify the division between younger people and elderly people Barbara Windsor refers to general behaviour of human beings; "A lot of people live together because it's convenient." This reference to general behaviour of human beings denotes the category human.

Again, a book review by The Daily Mail on the 17th of September in 1987 is about "*This 'n That*" by the seventy-nine year-old Ruth Elizabeth Davis, better known as Miss Bette Davis. In 1983 Miss Bette had a mastectomy followed nine days later by a stroke which left her partly paralysed. According to the reviewer David Lewin, although her doctors said there was a slim chance of her making it, "She is back again – and working. Her speech is there. Her mind is clear. She is walking and talking and acting." The reviewer who pointed out that the message of her book was "'Old age ain't no place for sissies.'" gave the readers her "simple belief: Sex is God's joke on human beings." The reviewer paid her a compliment that "when everyone's making much ado about love," "Give in, advises the star who's never given up."

As the category 'human' gave good evidence to the fact that the elderly are no different to the young there came forth a wide variety of elderly persons in articles on elderly people's sexuality. To regard elderly people as successors to young people implied doubt that deep divisions between elderly people and young people existed. In other words, notions of youthfulness were not always necessary for elderly people to possess sexuality. Thus, in contrast to previous discourse on elderly people's sexuality, in the 'approving discourse' many kinds of elderly people can be found. The first example presents a elderly lady who enjoyed whipping and

bondage in her brothel in London. "A [sixty-three year-old] pensioner [Mrs. Adelaide Sarrano] who dressed like a sex kitten specialised in whippings, bondage and humiliation at her brothel in London and in less than six days police saw 60 exhausted clients staggering from Madame Angela's flat, Knightsbridge Crown Court was told." (The Daily Telegraph July 8th 1987) Adelaide Sarrano's excited guests are elderly people. "Men flocked to her 'when they had been naughty' to dress up as women or be spanked." (The Daily Telegraph July 10th 1987)

Here's another example. Although the sixty-nine husband Mr. McCulloch was accused of getting his sixty-three year-old wife Mrs. McCulloch to have sex with him the Court of Session in Edinburgh ordered Mrs. McCulloch to pay her husband 5,000 pounds in a divorce settlement [In advance Mrs. McCulloch had sold their house without getting her husband's consent]. The Court heard that "SHE [Mrs. McCulloch] insisted on sleeping on the living-room floor, HE [Mr. McCulloch] stayed alone in the bedroom," he had a violent temper, and "she wasn't the easiest person to get on with." (The Daily Record May 13th 1987) In contrast to the 'approving discourse' in the previous discourse on elderly people's sexuality an elderly wife who refused sexual intercourse with her husband was not persecuted. Thus, we are to assume that the notion that elderly couple in their mature age are sexually capable is, in the 'approving discourse,' embraced. The subtitle of this article in The Daily Record was "Wife's Amazing Ban on Sex."

Again, a sexual attack on an elderly woman by a young "thug" became a part of "almost daily" crimes. "She [the eighty-two year-old pensioner] is the latest victim of almost daily attacks on Britain's aged which have been highlighted this year by The Daily Mail, and have become a top action priority for police." (The Daily Mail June 12th 1987) In contrast to the previous discourse about elderly people's sexuality where sexual assaults towards elderly women were



confined to younger rapists' "abnormal" sexual appetite, in the 'approving discourse,' elderly women became daily targets of younger rapists' sexual assaults.

Here is similar example. "The trouble with the late-night party crowd at Annie Wood House, in Birmingham, is that they simply won't act their age." (The Guardian September 18th 1987) According to The Guardian correspondent "Annie Wood House, in Newtown, Birmingham, has 60 men and women residents who are free to go to bed – or not when they wish." Elderly people in nursing homes enjoy their sexual lives as they wish.

Here's another example. The fifty-eight year-old Dr. Ruth Westheimer who published *Dr. Ruth's Guide to Good Sex in America* has just started her career in a British talk programme about sex. "Pwemature ejaculation, infertility, sex in old age, I've got it – vot you vant?" (The Daily Record April 13th 1987) In the 'approving discourse' elderly people could be sexual advisers towards younger people's sex. It was said that "her age gives her maturity and experience." and she was confident about it. "If I voss a 25-year-old blonde, it vould not vork. I give der same advice as a well-educated auntie." (ibid, The Daily Record April 13th 1987)

Not surprisingly, the various sorts of elderly described in these examples imply distinctive picture of elderly people in sexual discourse. First, accounts of elderly people focusing on ageing and frailty appeared. A following example is about a travel sketch of the Yorkshire coast. Two middle-aged travelling men headed for the pub Cock and Lion by the harbour in Costa Bridlington to watch "the seemingly immortal" singer Tassie Hamilton accompanied by a male friend. The audience were over sixty-fives. Here is the last part of the article. "Finally Harry is carried off the stage on a great wave of cheers and applause; and John and I stagger out into the



mid-afternoon rain feeling very very old. Brid's a great place to visit, but I don't think I could live here. I could never stand the pace." (ibid, The Guardian August 22nd 1987)

What the two middle-aged travelling men saw in Costa Bridlington was that age comes to all of us, and this is what we have already seen in 'representations of exceptional sexuality,' the historically previous discourse.

However the 'approving discourse' suggests that most elderly people are powerful and succeeded in well-organised lives and social activities. In light of the fact that old age is the continuation of youth there is often a tendency to depict elderly people collapsed into young, well-organised elderly people. The gap between elderly people and younger people can be bridged in such a way that we first and foremost emphasise their youthfulness, though they have fleck and flection as earmarks of old age. The following is a highlight of what we discussed above in a travel sketch of the Yorkshire coast. This example shows us one of the perfect integration between the depiction of frailty and the depiction of youth into one sentence regarding one of the sexually active elderly people.

"Finally the star of the show is announced. 'A Mega Star in her own mind! Famous all over the world in Brid! Fresh from entertaining the troops at the Battle of the Somme! 78 years young! (True.) Tassie Hamilton!' And on to the cleared floor space leaps an extraordinary figure wearing black riding boots, fish net tights, a slashed red mini-skirt, and big red knickers. 'Come t' see the old cow perform?' she leers. 'Or whether she's snuffed it!' As Tassie roars into her act several people in wheelchairs are rolled in looking – perhaps understandably – apprehensive. They needn't. 'Where you from, love?' yells Tassie to one of them.' [...] Tassie grabs the audience by the throat – and other parts." (The Guardian August 22nd 1987)

For elderly people's sexuality to find approval, that elderly people are deemed nearly equal to young people, a way to link the generality of elderly people and sexuality was required. Therefore, in most cases, descriptions of persons who were ahead of young people in passion and vitality, or youthfulness, were focused on. The article by The Daily Express on the 4th of March in 1987 is about the secrets of the fifty-five year-old actress Elizabeth Taylor's "eternal beauty." Although, when she was forty-five years old, she was described as "Horrendous – to see age suddenly taking its toll of Liz Taylor" (The Daily Express April 27th 1977), ten years later, she was said to have got the superstructure in breathtaking shape over "an avalanche of too much living, too many illnesses, too many bottles of booze and pills, too many husbands and too many brawls." (ibid, The Daily Express April 27th 1977)

"Her skin is dewy and firm. Her hair, artistically streaked with silver, is full and luxuriant and when she stands up her waist is of the old fashioned kind you just don't see anymore – 23 inches, her costume designer reports. [...] Once she carried more than 12 stone on her diminutive 5ft 4in frame. Now she wears size six jeans, weighs around  $7\frac{1}{2}$  stone and looks not an hour over 35."

Elizabeth Taylor said "I plan to be sexually active when I am 65." (The Daily Telegraph August 18th 1987) Her current partner was also described as a sexually active man. "The flamboyant 67-year-old son of a Scots newspaperman has popped the question. [...] [...] She [his fifty-five year-old girlfriend Elizabeth Taylor] gave Malcolm a big kiss, and said she needed time to think about it [Malcolm's proposal to her]. But she's fascinated by Malcolm's energy and vitality. She says everyday with him is a new adventure." (The Daily Record August 31st 1987) Youth was often seen as a high priority in the 'approving view' of elderly people's sexuality.

The 'approving view' of elderly people's sexuality brought about a new development in the discourse of elderly people's sexuality; humanity and universality of sexuality amongst elderly people was the most important element here. At the level of 'human' sexuality we would say that there is no difference between elderly people's sexuality and young people's sexuality, and that elderly people's sexuality is to be treated as the successor to young people's sexuality. While elderly people were full of youth and in most cases their profuse amount of energy was much greater than that of young people, the descriptions that elderly people are full of youth in terms of physical traits are not always required in order to bring elderly people nearer to sexuality and sex than ever before. Some elderly people with physical shifts that implicate old age did exist.

This most important element in this type of elderly people's sexuality, humanity and universality, is crystallised in the following two criticisms towards historically the previous discourse, 'representations of exceptional sexuality.' From the view of the 'approving discourse' previous discourse on elderly people's sexuality is unconvincing firstly because it represented elderly people as isolated (confined to nursing homes and out-dated pension schemes) and deviant (devalued by youth-obsessed sexual standards). Also the 'approving discourse' addresses the processes that makes elderly people into young, independent and well-organised elderly people. The new descriptions gave the public plenty of reasons not to ignore humanity and universality relating to elderly people's sexuality.

On the first issue, the representation of elderly people's sexuality as deviant and isolated, the 'approving discourse,' rejecting the isolation of elderly people's sexuality, attempts to expose the inequities of the treatment of elderly people on pension schemes. Let me give you two examples.

For such attempts to expose the inequities of the treatment of elderly people on pension schemes to become persuasive it is necessary to blame how out-of-date the British pension schemes are. The seventy-three year-old retired chartered accountant John McDowell and his fifty-seven fiancé Betty Anderson were said to be “not what you’d call a typical engaged couple” and the possibility that John would lead Betty down the aisle looked very remote. (The Glasgow Herald April 28th 1987) For the couple stood to lose more than 4,000 pounds, the entitlement from Betty’s late husband, the moment they tie the knot. What’s more, if John died Betty would not have her pension reinstated and John’s pension scheme would not pay her a pension either. John said “There must be thousands of couples in our position, forced to live in sin.” The Herald reporter said “The roots of John and Betty’s dilemma lie deep in the history of pension schemes [...]. [...] [...] At 73 he can’t be a ‘boyfriend.’ And ‘constant companion’ doesn’t sound right either. ‘I thought Mrs Thatcher wanted everyone to go back to Victorian values. Yet because of this crazy situation I can’t even get married.’” (ibid, The Glasgow Herald April 28th 1987)

Here is another example. This example implicitly demonstrates how immense a demand for pension rights there would be. The disputation by readers of The Daily Telegraph about the granting of pension rights that is being sought for Sheila, Lady Maybray-King, after her seven-month marriage to the retired Speaker of the House of Commons lasted through the whole of the month of March. This is part of one of the contributions.

“While it is accepted that the granting of pension rights to the surviving member of all military/civil servant post-retirement marriages, could be open to abuse, I am sure that legislation could ensure that a continuous post-retirement marriage of at least five years’ duration would be necessary before a pension right is granted. Such legislation would receive a very favourable reception in the country.” (The Daily Telegraph March 23rd 1987)

A great demand (which amounts to great “abuse” because when there’s a great demand abuse escapes careful inspection), for pension rights of short-term relationship between elderly people illustrates that many elderly married/unmarried couples suffer from their position of being isolated from the reality in British society. In ‘representations of the exceptional sexuality’ of elderly people, deviancy and isolation conditioned the ‘peculiarity’ of elderly people’s sexuality. In contrast to previous discourse about elderly people’s sexuality the ‘approving discourse’ shakes up the notions of characterising elderly people’s sexuality as deviant and isolated by younger-people-centred social norms and institutions.

As for the second issue, namely the discovery that sexuality has the function that makes elderly people into young, independent and well-organised elderly people, there are the following three examples. “Sex is a very effective stress reliever [for executives aged between forty-nine and sixty-nine].” (The Daily Telegraph September 1st 1987) Second, this is part of an article which focused on a “young-at-heart” husband. “‘I am an old married man now,’ he said after the ceremony, also announcing that his boozing and brawling days were over.” (ibid, The Daily Record February 27th 1987) A marriage to a younger bride encouraged the old bridegroom to give up his bad habits like drinking and fighting.

Let me show you the details on the third example because many readers of The Daily Mail were involved. Linda Lee-Potter was the writer of the piece of paper about the Queen Mother: “The Queen Mother is rightly much revered for her energy, work schedule and nimble dexterity while dancing the Schottische.” Many readers couldn’t wait to write to her. According to Linda a deluge of mail’s constant theme was that “they [“vibrant, adventurous, fiercely independent 80-year-olds and over”] are still working, battling on in the mainstream of life, not sitting back as observers.” (The Daily Mail October 14th 1987) All letters mentioned in this article were about

their non-sexual privileged life except one: “Jeanne Bates, from Surbiton, writes about her 84-year-old Aunt Nance, saying: ‘She’s full of joie de vivre, reads The Daily Mail every day, can discuss everything from the Gulf war to AIDS, “And I even know what a condom is, dear,” she said the other day.’” (ibid, The Daily Mail October 14th 1987) Taking those letters “from young and old, rich and poor” Linda aimed at showing the socially contributory function of old people’s sexuality. “But above all, in an era where we forever read about the family unit breaking up, with the elderly at risk and on the scrap heap, it was brilliant to read about the thousands of over-80s both loved and much-loved [in a sexual sense] and a constant source of inspiration to everybody around them.” (ibid, The Daily Mail October 14th 1987)

In this discourse “the unparalleled function” of elderly people’s sexuality was to make all elderly people into powerful persons who succeed in having well-organised lives and social activities. As I mentioned above, required to inject humanity and universality into elderly people’s sexuality was both a rejection of isolation and a need for making all elderly people into real people. Rejecting notions of deviancy and isolation in elderly people’s sexuality underpins the discourse of approval: elderly sexuality was to be treated as normal sexuality. Moreover, the statement that elderly people’s sexuality could be very effective enhanced the reputation of elderly people’s sexuality.

As to elderly people’s sexuality, many descriptions which laid particular stress on its humanity and universality were provided. This is the conclusion of the article concerning the sixty-three year-old pensioner Mrs. Adelaide Sarrano who dressed like a sex kitten specialised in whippings, bondage and humiliation at her brothel in London. “Mrs Sarrano said: ‘I do not feel guilty about anything I have done. My family know [original] all about my life and they don’t think it’s disgusting. Whatever I do is done behind closed doors.’ But she broke down and wept



as she said: 'I don't do it for money. I'm in it because it keeps me young.'" (The Daily Telegraph July 10th 1987)

Elderly people's sexuality in turn implies his/her life itself: "The constant companion who has given him a new lease of life." (The Daily Record March 30th 1987) This significant reference point of this ideal imagery of elderly people's sexuality should be expressed following two levels: (1) Sexuality reflects our lives. (2) Our lives reflect sexuality. For example, a murder amongst elderly people was to be related with the universal provocation. "An eternal triangle of love and jealousy ended in murder – and all three people involved were in their seventies, Winchester Crown Court was told yesterday." (The Daily Telegraph May 19th 1987)

Here's another example. A writer Diana Holman Hunt who, as to her age, said "I was a teenage bride and have a grand-daughter of 22, so anyone could work it out." tried to find grace in growing old. According to her it is Shakespeare who "makes old age sound so horrible – bald, deaf, blind." (The Daily Telegraph January 12th 1987) She goes on: "I always have a favourite man in my life. When you are older, you don't suffer the agonies of being in love, but I still suffer emotionally over friendships and family. But one is inclined to be less dramatic when things go wrong. You are more serene, because you have seen it all before." (ibid, The Daily Telegraph January 12th 1987) Here is the defining point: elderly sexuality is the successor to young and middle aged sexuality as a part of human sexuality.

Offers by the British to help a penniless elderly couple "have flooded in." (The Observer May 3rd 1987) The couple was the forty-seven year-old geriatric nurse and bride Carroll Lee Douglass and the eighty-five year-old former head of the New York Metropolitan Opera Sir Rudolf Bing, whose 700,000 pounds assets were frozen by the New York court after his wedding



due to his completely dominating wife, his being senile and incapable of rational decisions and handling his affairs. (The Daily Express April 29th 1987) Sir Rudolf was said to suffer from the brain-degenerative Alzheimer's disease. Lady Bing's large assets were also frozen by the American court because she was placed in the care of a guardian five years ago due to a history of mental instability. (The Daily Telegraph February 16th 1987)

Most correspondents on the matter were prone to feel for the couple. "Although they own large estates in their own right, they are regarded by the American courts as mentally incapable of managing their considerable finances." (The Daily Telegraph April 28th 1987) Lady Bing insisted that "He remembers the past beautifully but, like many people's grandparents, he doesn't remember a few small things about the present. He is not ill." (ibid, The Daily Express April 29th 1987) In order to call on the British for their support Bing's British lawyer asserted that Sir Rudolf was a genius in music. "Sir Rudolf just sat there. He frequently said things like 'Where am I? Where have I been? What am I doing here?' 'I didn't think he was competent. His short-term memory is non-existent but he does have an appreciation of things.'" (The Daily Mail February 13th 1987)

The title of the article by The Daily Mail on the 12th of February in 1987 "We're Just a Romeo and Juliet" was based on what Lady Bing said about the private side of her life. "She met Sir Rudolf in the foyer at an opera matinee. 'I thought to myself. "What an adorable elderly gentleman." The next thing I remember is that we were shaking hands and he invited me for a smoke. That's how it all started. Anybody who believes in Romeo and Juliet must believe in our love.'" (ibid, The Daily Mail February 12th 1987) The analogy of "Romeo and Juliet" like "L-Plate Romeo 72: 'I'll Steer Clear of Girls'" (The Daily Mail July 18th 1987) qualified elderly people's sexuality for their bus passes. (The Independent Tabloid August 14th 1997) Likewise

The Sunday Post correspondent celebrating Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip's ruby anniversary reported that they answered the question: "So how does the marriage stand today – nearly forty years on?" as follows. "It would be idle to pretend that they are still in the flush of youthful romance. Romeo has become Darby and Juliet is Joan." (The Sunday Post May 24th 1987) In conclusion, in the approving view of elderly people's sexuality it was the category human that would convince the public that elderly people's sexuality is the successor to young people's sexuality.

### **"Madame Cynthia Payne and The House of a Thousand and One Delights"**

Police raided "The House of a Thousand and One Delights," known as "Madame Cyne's home," at 32 Ambleside Avenue, Streatham, south-west London, following undercover investigations between December 1985 and May 1986. The raid was London's biggest ever vice operation. The fifty-three year-old six-bedroom house landlady, Mrs. Cynthia Payne, was arrested during a party at her house on the 30th of May 1986 at which two police officers had posed as guests. A lot of the men there were "elderly gentlemen" who outnumbered the girls four to one. (The Daily Telegraph February 7th 1987) It is said that so intent on occasions were the guests to have sexual relations of some sort with the ladies who were prepared to offer sexual services that sexual activity took place on the stairs whilst the parties were waiting for bedrooms to become vacant. (The Guardian January 23rd 1987) Sergeant David Broadwell, the first member of the raiding party into Madame Payne's home, told the Inner London Crown Court how he burst into an upstairs bathroom and found a couple engaged in a form of sexual intercourse. (The Daily Telegraph January 27th 1987) There was talk of a tattooed lady, wheelchairs, sticks, a

lesbian floor show, masochistic slaves, whips, high-heeled shoes, wigs and humiliation. The whole country rocked to the stories. (The Daily Mail February 12th 1987)

Inspector Colin White who led the raid on the Madame Payne's house agreed that everyone at the three parties the police monitored had been over the age of consent and a more than willing guest. (The Guardian January 29th 1987) A number of witnesses, including a man of eighty-five year-old, a sixty-four year-old retired police chief superintendent Peter Jones who first met Madame Payne in 1976 when he led a police raid, and two who were disabled and walked with sticks, who attended the parties, have testified that no money was handed to Madame Payne for organising sex parties at her home. (The Guardian February 10th 1987) No hostesses said that they had been coerced to have a sex by Madame Payne. Transvestite Keith Savage, who was dressed as a French maid, said thirty to forty officers burst in, and claimed one of them fondled him. "He was a bit overbearing. He was trying to console me, but he got rather boisterous, a bit over-friendly. [...] He put his hand under my skirt and on my bottom. By that time, I realised it was not a comforting gesture." (The Sun January 24th 1987) Describing the vulgar policeman who touched him up as "bearded and very, very fat" (ibid, The Sun January 24th 1987) Savage declared "He was trying to pull me in between his legs. I think he had a motive of a sexual nature." (The Independent January 4th 1987) By contrast one of undercover policeman Jack Jones in make-up as a bisexual had to make an excuse, for instance: "Never at any time did I have fun at Cynthia Payne's parties." (The Daily Record January 27th 1987) In fact, one of the guests who turned up with a box of chocolates and bouquet of flowers in Streatham on the 13th of December in 1985, was a policeman using a false name. (The Times January 23rd 1987)

Madame Payne did not dispute that party guests at her house had sex in the bedrooms. However, although Madame Payne had always pleaded guilty during past court appearances –

four convictions for brothel keeping, one for running a disorderly house, in 1978 – this time she denied ten charges of controlling, directing or influencing prostitutes for financial gain between December 1985 and May 1986. Sergeant David Broadwell told Inner London Crown Court that, when an inspector asked if that could involve sexual acts, Madame Payne replied; “You’re a prude.” (ibid, *The Daily Record* January 27th 1987) In the witness box she told how brutally police raided her party in May 1986. “My guests were frightened. It was a terrifying experience. They were not crooks sitting there, they were genuine people, distinguished people, old people and disabled people. I had to pacify them.” (*The Independent* February 6th 1987) It is clear that the category human enabled the attributes of sexuality of elderly people and young people to be recognised as the same.

An eighty-five year-old, Walter Taylor, told the court that he went for non-sexual purposes. “In my old age, life is rather dull and these parties were very jolly and they sort of made me feel younger and that was rather [original] nice.” (*The Guardian* February 6th 1987) In the ‘approving discourse’ we have seen this function of sexuality as making elderly people into young, independent and well-organised elderly people. And Madame Payne’s counsel David Spens asked the jury not to fall into the trap of being “censorious, moralistic or hypocritical.” “Everyone at the parties was a consenting adult. What went on at Ambleside Avenue [the Madame Payne’s house] may or may not have been sordid, but what harm did it do?” (ibid, *The Guardian* February 10th 1987) David Spens attempts to expose the unreason of the isolation and deviancy regarding elderly people’s sexuality. One correspondent cynically described the relationship between Madame Payne and her elderly guests as: “They [Madame Payne’s elderly guests] took on a new lease of life at the wild sex parties that have made Cynthia Paine a celebrity.” (*The Daily Express* February 12th 1987) This is what we have seen as the message: elderly people’s sexuality is his/her life itself.

After eleven days of hearing the intimate details of sex parties at Madame Payne's home the jury of eight men and four women cleared Madame Payne of all charges of controlling prostitutes. When the jury cleared Madame Payne on all accounts the Judge ordered that her costs be paid out of central funds. And she wouldn't pay a penny for total legal costs. In other words Madame Payne won the trial completely. Laughs poured out of the Inner London Sessions like something from a music hall. (ibid, The Daily Mail February 12th 1987) A photograph of Madame Payne "clutching her toy policeman mascot – named Inspector Colin White after the man who led the swoop on a party in her suburban villa – police were counting the cost of the vice raid that turned into a farce" went down in history. (The Daily Record February 12th 1987) Well-wishers shouted their support to Madame Payne when she left the court. Superintendent Iain Donaldson of the Obscene Publications Squad who led the eighteen-month Operation Perch said "I think the impression in the press was that it was taken lightly but if you had been sitting and listening to the evidence it is clear that impression was false." (The Guardian February 12th 1987) He was said to say that the exercise was prompted by rumours that police were turning a blind eye on Madame Payne's parties and the squad was said to praise the judge for his even-handed approach. (ibid, The Daily Express February 12th 1987)

#### **4-3 The Praising View of Elderly People's Sexuality in 1997**

By the end of the 1980s historicity and spirituality in elderly people's sexuality constituted an important part of elderly people's sexual discourse. It was now assumed that elderly people's valuable and profound sexuality not only reflects each person's way of living and life itself, but that each person also reflects their sexuality. In addition to that, elderly people turn their

reproductive-oriented sexuality into new enjoyable and joyous sexuality and place it in the centre of their lives; this generates transcendence of their life force. It is the story of elderly people's sexuality as "living."

"Where is the advert which shows a mature woman in any setting other than a kitchen or hobbling to a building society? Where is the drama which shows glorious sex between long-lasting partners? [...] [...] For her [a sexually active older woman], sex has ceased to be a performance and has become a renewal, a celebration of being alive. [...] [...] Many of us are more confident, less bothered about the body perfect, less inhibited about expressing likes and dislikes, and much less concerned about what others might think." (The Daily Mail November 21st 1997)

Here is another example. "After first love blooms it becomes a compatibility thing and it becomes a question of respect for each other. After 55 years it becomes a retrospective thing, you look back on your life and love takes on a different meaning." (The Herald May 3rd 1997)

Again, transcendence in the sphere of male sexiness is the topic of the article in The Daily Record on the 7th of February 1997. "Grey hair isn't only 'distinguished' – for years a euphemism for 'old.' It's also drop-dead sexy. [...] [...] The ones that suit it [grey hair] usually have a good psychological attitude and see growing old as part of being human. [...] [...] although some men hate looking older, other grow old gracefully."

The world famous writer John Updike who was about to publish *Toward The End of Time* about sex in old men indignantly said that "Sex dies hard: even when the apparatus is still in place. He still wants affection, he still wants love." (The Guardian October 18th 1997)



An article by The Express on the 10th of June in 1997 is about an announcement that the “old rocker” Mick Jagger and his wife Jerry Hall were to become parents of their fourth child. Having a baby “at the ripe old age of 54” (The Express December 10th 1997) has gone against “the trend.” (ibid, The Express December 10th 1997) According to the female writer “the trend” means elderly couples are not expected to have a baby: “There will be those, of course, who cavil: [...] the busy bodying agony aunts and marriage counsellors who will warn Jerry and Mick against having another baby for the ‘wrong’ reasons ... to keep a sometimes uncertain marriage together, or just to prove that the couple, though no longer in youth’s prime, are still fertile and virile.” (ibid, The Express June 10th 1997) But the writer goes on to insist that older people have the maturity and the spirit to cherish children.

“If a man is proud to beget a child when old, it will make him an ever fonder father, for what is accomplished so easily in youth is often less appreciated than that which appears as a gift and a surprise in the afternoon of life. And a child is not just a child – it is a symbol of life’s continuation, of life’s affirmation, of the eternal renewal of life’s flame. It is a vote of confidence in the future, a celebration of the history of a couple and a family.” (ibid, The Express June 10th 1997)

The estimation that elderly people’s sexuality can produce remarkable creations comprises a part of the story of elderly people’s sexuality as life itself. For example, the commentary by The Independent on Sunday on the 27th of July 1997 about Lloyd Newson’s new dance work, *Bound to Please*, was favourable. According to the critic Josephine Leask, there were four misfits in this “all in all a love-affair with the body beautiful.”



“The older woman [the 70-year-old dancer Diana Payne-Myers], the anorak-wearing nerd, the shadowy voyeur who disrupts and molests the dancers and the young female dancer who cannot conform either mentally or physically. These pariahs do not conform to dance’s narrow preoccupations of outward perfection and beauty and through these characters we are reminded of our flawed society.”

Josephine Leask realised that Diana and the young male dancer Liam Steel’s love scene which is at least “deviating towards the norm” (ibid, *The Independent* on Sunday July 27<sup>th</sup> 1997) started the long saga of exorcising female ageing bodies from youth-centred society.

“Diana Payne-Myers, still physically formidable, acts out the rejections suffered by the older woman both by the dance world and our western society. The most powerful moment of the whole show is a naked love scene with Payne-Myers and a younger man, as it highlights how unused we are to seeing sagging, female ageing bodies portrayed positively in the acts of dancing and lovemaking.”

Here elderly people’s sexuality makes our life shining and rich; it contributes towards society and increases a new demand for sexuality to be applied to our lives.

“Young people often assume that sex is no longer relevant once a person reaches old age, but that is untrue. My husband and I enjoyed a fulfilling sexual relationship right until the end, when we were both well into our 80s. Of course, sex becomes less frequent with age. But the need for physical closeness is still there. [...] [...] I’m convinced that being sexually active prolongs life by keeping you mentally and physically alert. In a good marriage, physical

attraction is there until the end – and it adds a great deal to happiness and satisfaction in old age.”  
(The Daily Mail April 8th 1997)

This sort of observation of elderly people’s sexuality, that women can have sexual intercourse until their last breath, shapes the definition of elderly people in relation to succeeding experiences of sexuality through their lives. It is evident that there’s some similarity between the ‘praising view’ of elderly people’s sexuality and the previous ‘approving view,’ namely that elderly people’s sexuality is the successor to young people’s sexuality, as in the emphasis that human sexuality is ever changing its quality; this is seen in the notion that “When you enter what could be your last decade, neither the thought ‘I am virtuous’ nor ‘I was a sexual athlete of Olympic standards’ can make you feel that your life has significance in the universal scheme of things.” (ibid, The Daily Mail April 8th 1997) But in addition to this, the praising discourse suggests that elderly people’s sexuality is the ultimate expression of human sexuality encompassing progressive, historical, and spiritual aspects. Elderly sexuality, which covers the highest things to the lowest ones – good to evil, beauty to ugliness, truth to deception, the sublime to the ridiculous and so on – is the supreme “living” sexuality, becoming a value in itself. That is to say, the greatness of elderly people’s sexuality is in “our prime.” (The Daily Mail April 7th 1997)

As for the notion that elderly people’s sexuality is to “make the most of life.” (The Daily Mail April 18th 1997), let me give you three examples.

“Tiredness, anxiety and zero sex drive are words commonly associated with women in their fifties. Not so, says Ms Fox [Ms. Josephine Fox], aged 55: life is better than ever. ‘Since I reached my middle years, life has really taken off.’” (The Independent July 22nd 1997)

The article by The Daily Mail on the 21st of November 1997 is about sexuality in old age. Many female writers gave comments on it and there is a common perspective: sexuality in old age is the best of all. "Sex could be delicious; sex could be relaxing; sex, which I had always taken so seriously, could, indeed, be hilarious and fun. [...] But for a large number of women, sex simply gets better and better. In other words, when it comes to sex, we have never had it so good," the fifty-three year-old columnist Virginia Ironside said. Honor Blackman, who is seventy-one years old said: "Sex isn't just for young people. I believe we can enjoy some of the best sex of our lives when we are older, and that we can know exactly what we want from intimate relationships." The sixty-three year-old author Denise Robertson said:

"Around your fiftieth birthday, it dawns on you that, contrary to everything you have been led to believe, sex is not the prerogative of the young. [...] We have the capacity to remain sexual beings throughout our lives. [...] The fact is that for a healthy woman, sex is not only possible but advisable, and if physical limitations come with age, the true lover will always find a way round them." (ibid, The Daily Mail November 21st 1997)

When elderly people's sexuality as the ultimate expression of human sexuality becomes a value in itself, one might call it spiritual, something with overwhelming energy, life itself. Elderly people with a physical appearance that indicates old age now appear repeatedly in elderly people's sexual discourse. Here is the article about the first public appearance of the sixty-five year-old Elizabeth Taylor with her snow white spiky hair. "The visible effect might be dramatic but it is inside her head where the biggest change has taken place. In an era where youth is beauty and beauty is everything, Ms Taylor's decision is nothing short of heroic. But it has paid off. For rather than leaving her looking lack-lustre her short-cropped silver locks have given her a new confidence." (The Express July 30th 1997) Again, the eight-two year-old world-famous writer

Saul Bellow, who was indignant at the way young girls just wanted to get a little sexual activity, said, “Human character is smaller now, people don’t have durable passions; they’ve replaced passions with excitement.” (The Guardian September 10th 1997) His point was that, with the physically ageing body appropriate sexuality implied passion. Elderly people’s mental sexuality is opposed to sexuality with penetration – young sexuality. Elderly people with their own sexuality do not have to be described as having youthful appearance: thus old age is allowed to exist in sexual discourse about elderly people.

The thirty-nine year-old actress Jenny Seagrove who is well known to have relationships with “older, bulkier figures” said: “Physical attractiveness in men has never much mattered [to me]. [...] I’m much more interested in their charisma, their energy, their interests, whether they make you feel special, whether they make you laugh. I think most woman are the same. Is *your* [writer’s emphasis] partner an Adonis?” (The Daily Telegraph August 26th 1997)

Here is another example. A retired seventy-one year-old shopkeeper Irving Mendelson felt uncomfortable being “a grey sex-god.” (The News of the World May 25th 1997) Because he was an outspoken member of the regular audience of a top-rated TV show he got “CHATTED up in the pension queue, CHASED down the street, HOUNDED for autographs and PROPOSITIONED by women of all ages.” (ibid, The News of the World May 25th 1997) He groaned that he was even chased by a load of student girls in Manchester like he was one of The Beatles. The reporter summed up Irving’s main points like this. “Irving’s glad to be grey but not at all comfortable as a sex symbol.” (ibid, The News of the World May 25th 1997) This example reveals that elderly sexuality is reckoned as different sexuality.

In this age elderly British men wanting to marry a young mail-order bride from south-east Asia and eastern Europe are criticised for their wrong choice. The praising discourse indicates that British women of the men's age would be perfectly acceptable spouses. They attract not a little ridicule (although some jealousy as well). "There is, certainly, something disturbing in the idea of such marriages [the marriage between an elderly British man and his young mail-order bride from south-east Asia and eastern Europe], and I wonder at the mentality and motivations of men who want a young bride who probably can share little of life's experience or knowledge with them." (The Guardian October 4th 1997)

The seventy year-old widow Davida Rosenblum was thinking of "the dreaded moment" in bed while taking a walk having been reconciled with her seventy-two year-old first love, first lover, and widower Marc after almost half a century interval.

"I considered the possibilities. On the one hand, he might run screaming from the room. On the other hand, I might run screaming from the room. And even if we could tolerate the sight of each other, we might not be moved to do anything more than literally sleep together. In the light of our youthful passion, I found this scenario the most depressing of all." (The Observer Review July 20th 1997)

However, this sexual image of elderly people is similar to the elegant image of the Japanese *kotan* which tends to be abstract and escape from the difficulties which come with age like a decay in health and a conflict between what he/she used to be and what he/she is. The fact is that it is "senior citizen" or "ageing people," who are supposed to possess this spiritual sexuality. As the next example shows, elderly people are able to enjoy their accumulation of age without any difficulties, even though they have the external physical traits that come with old age.

Elderly people remain located within the sphere of young and productive elderly people in terms of their inner characteristics.

“Even sexual misdemeanours can be forgiven. Many of these are committed by men who have, at 65 or so, feared oncoming senility and the loss of potency and shot off into an exhausting affair with girls half their age or less, just to prove themselves.” (The Guardian The Week November 22nd 1997)

Even if spirituality is the essence of the praising view of the elderly people’s sexuality, it contains in most cases “liveliness” as well. In some of the following articles elderly people who have maintained their sexual activity are distinguished from those who are demented or unable to leave his/her bed.

“Her appearance is proof that her senior years are not a bar to childbirth. Her skin is clear and unlined, her long blonde hair is glossy and she has almost completely recovered her slim figure which would do justice to a woman half her age.” (The Express February 4th 1997)

“They claimed they wanted to die before they got old, and then, when the requisite time came, they decided that this didn’t make very much sense. Then they decided they would change the definition of old to something approaching the bed-pan and nursing-home extreme. Didn’t work either. Enter a crisis among the middle-aged and newly old – no, let’s be more specific: enter a crisis among middle-aged and newly old men. [...] Repetitive marriage is a good start.” (The Herald February 15th 1997)

“To be middle-aged in Britain has often been associated with armchairs at home and windy deckchairs in Scarborough. But all that is changing as the over-fifties rush to refocus their lives with exotic adventure holidays, rejuvenated bodies – and lots of sex. [...] [...] Before the recession people in this group were dismissed as ‘wrinklies’ and ‘crumblied.’” (The Observer January 26th 1997)

“Amid this orgy of archaeological humour, it’s amazing that the papers still find a new Stones tour and matching album so newsworthy. The price for being the token great survivors of the mythic sixties is having to put up with reporters embarrassed by watching such raddled old people strutting about singing about sex and violence, incredulous that such an ancient institution is still able to function, let alone sell far more tickets than U2.” (The Guardian September 27th 1997)

As in the ‘exceptional’ and ‘approving’ discourses, in the ‘praising view’ of elderly people’s sexuality, those who are estimated to have supreme sexuality are lusty young and independent elderly people who succeed in well-organised lives and social activities. On the other hand the praising discourse, along with articles from the point of view of medical science, physiology and sexual science, emphasises the qualitative change in elderly people’s sexuality, marking it out as different from younger people’s sexuality. This suggests, as I noted already, that elderly people are able to enjoy their accumulation of age without any difficulties, even though they have the external physical traits that come with old age.

Let us check this point using an article in which elderly people who have the external physical traits that come with old age appear. When Davida Rosenblum spoke about her “most depressing” scenario in bed she was in bewilderment between youth-obsessed imagery and joy in



old age regarding elderly people's sexuality, uniting the two in one writing. Her fears about this scenario proved to be unfounded.

"He might no longer be sexually viable – my impression was that most men in their seventies weren't, and even though at our age it probably wouldn't matter, one way or another, the process of discovery was unimaginable. [...] [...] There will not be here a description, elliptical or otherwise, of what ensued. I am the wrong generation for that. Suffice it to say that yes, he could, and our love-making was as delicious, intoxicating and graceful, yes graceful, as it had ever been in our youth. There was not one moment of awkwardness; however altered, our bodies were merely the conduits of our mutual need and our joy in having rediscovered each other. [...] We are endlessly surprised by this unexpected gift and the pleasure we take in each other's company. It is all the proof we need that there is indeed life after death." (ibid, The Observer Review July 20th 1997)

During this period of time the description that elderly people's sexuality is spiritual through transcendence enabled elderly people (= the ageing) to "tune in and drop out in the Flower Power era" (The Daily Record December 6th 1997). There exist two opposite assumptions: the first is the image that elderly people's sexuality is the successor to young people's sexuality, continuously drawn out by well-controlled accumulation of age from young to old, and on the other hand there is the image of transformation in quality to engage something profound in human life. This alone is sufficient justification to treat the praising view of elderly people's sexuality, "the flower of our sexuality keeping time," as a new discourse of elderly people's sexuality. It seems the appreciation of elderly people's "the flower of our sexuality keeping time" has noticeable overtones of elegance and excellence where passing time brings a decline of health and death like the image *kotan*, but it is free from prestigious ideals which the

image *kotan* can not escape. Whereas *kotan* implies achievement of self-complacency as the complete elderly people's image, the appreciation of elderly people's "the flower of our sexuality keeping time" can formulate general rules or principles which give innumerable possibilities regarding the "withering up" of British society as a whole, without a holy image of elderly people. That is to say, elderly people's sexuality calls for a critical look from microcosmos to macrocosmos.

### **"A Veteran Soup Opera Actor Bill Waddington and *Coronation Street*"**

On the 11th of June 1997 the eighty-one year-old soap's veteran actor Bill Waddington, who played Percy Sudgen in *Coronation Street* announced he would quit the programme after fourteen years in protest at the growing inclusion of sex scenes.

Mr. Waddington was expected to leave in September. His departure was the latest in a string which had followed the appointment in January of the new producer Brian Park, who was relying on an infusion of more young characters, new blood and "glamour" in an effort to attract more younger viewers. Mr. Waddington felt unable to continue given its new direction which he said owed more to *Brookside* or *EastEnders* – transient sexual intercourse neglecting long-lasting relationships. Mr. Waddington said: "Coronation Street is still the finest soap opera on television, but there is much too much sex in it for my liking. They are all at it." (The Daily Telegraph June 12th 1997) Mr. Waddington's complaint is that the true nature of elderly lives including sexuality was not recognised on *Coronation Street*. Instead, there is so much emphasis on raunchy younger sex. This emphasis contaminated the programme. This does not allow spirituality and life-giving elderly characters to be fully explored and appreciated.

*Coronation Street* is just ahead of its BBC rival *EastEnders* in terms of popularity, two shows which have been number one, drawing 15.8 million viewers to its most popular episode. In other words, it has been pulling in the viewers since its launch in December 1960 and more than half the country watches *Coronation Street*. Most TV producers believed that they had to punctuate “the oldies” by spicier plots if the show was going to compete in the current TV climate. (The Sun June 12th 1997) The show was in a ratings war. In the long term *Coronation Street*’s audience is in decline. It also suffers from an ageing audience – forty percent of its regular viewers are over fifty-five – which is a turn-off for advertisers and means its audience is dying off. (The Independent June 12th 1997) Britain’s newest television station, Channel 5, wooed viewers with an aspirational soap opera which deals with what producers called “grey sex” – sex for the over-fifties – since the end of March of the year. Topics were designed to appeal to “greyer” viewers. Channel 5’s director of programming Dawn Airey said: “There are many people in their 50s who are not old. They look good.” (The Guardian February 10th 1997)

Mr. Waddington’s motive stands for elderly people’s confidence and fighting spirit which enabled them to count elderly sexuality as different from adolescent or younger one. According to The Sun it seemed the nation was split on the sensational issue, with young viewers calling for more and older fans backing Bill. (ibid, The Sun June 12th 1997) The Sun backed Mr. Waddington in its exclusive poll, *You The Jury*, with 8,220 saying he was right and just 335 saying he was wrong [There is no information of respondents’ sex, age and so on.]. (ibid, The Sun June 12th 1997) Later unofficially a *Coronation Street* insider revealed that they all – including the cast – had begged Mr. Waddington to stay and they all assured him that he was very much a part of the show. The Street bosses succeeded in allaying any fears Mr. Waddington had about the direction of the show, suggesting the possibility of tampering with the format of *Coronation*

*Street* as he liked. According to The Sun “Fans have saved Coronation Street grump Percy Sugden from the axe – after begging actor Bill Waddington not to quit.” (The Sun July 19th 1997)

Consider that Mr. Bill Waddington did the same thing in 1987. Mr. Waddington would not cause a stir and achieve his resistance to raunchy younger sex like 1997. In fact, when a television host Bob Holness declared his embarrassment against “some of the sexual activities” and “modern youth” going on TV in 1987, it did not cause the same stir as Mr. Waddington did. (The People January 4th 1987)

“The octogenarian” Mr. Waddington described elderly sexuality being different from youth-obsessed sexuality as follows. “Coronation Street was a nice community where people trusted each other. They could go into other’s homes as friends, not jump into bed with someone else’s wife. They are greatly overdoing the sex stories. I think it’s a mistake. I don’t think it needs bedroom scenes. Viewers should feel happy watching as a family. Viewers don’t want the seedier side of the world. [...] Coronation Street was always different.” (ibid, The Daily Telegraph June 12th 1997) Mr. Waddington thought *Coronation Street* encapsulated British spirituality and life-giving elderly characters and “raunchy” new storylines by young people for younger elderly people was nothing but an insult to it.

Along with changes in sexual discourse relating of Japan’s elderly, I shall address the changes relating to Britain in the next chapter.

## **5 Non-Self-Determining Self in Sexual Discourse about Elderly People**

### **5-1 Self-Determining and Highly Integrated Self in Sexual Discourse about Elderly People**

What we found when examining the discourses in chapter 3 and 4 is the process of recovering certain ideals about elderly people which modern civil societies had previously eliminated. The development of modernised industrial society in both Japan and Britain meant that no longer was the healthy young adult male the exclusive symbol of effective production; now disabled people, children, elderly people, and women were beginning to be included in the territory of productivity and effectiveness. Correspondingly there occurred change in sexual discourse about elderly people, from dirty and unpleasant, to deviant, to human and universal and finally to admiring; elderly people came to be counted not as outcast possessors of sexuality but as invulnerable possessors of sexuality. In other words, elderly people have been redeemed from an abjected sex to a fully perfect sex during over fifty years in both Japan and Britain. With this understanding we can expect the dawn of a new personhood and social and human point of view both in Japan and Britain. The ideas of this personhood are those of an autonomous and highly integrated self.

However, the thing is not so simple. The changes in the sexual discourse of elderly people is not a simple evolutionary process. Today when we think about a fully perfect person in

contemporary Japan and Britain, we realise that it remains a healthy young adult man. Persons are often characterised by biologically based differential in power. According to Foucault, sexuality-differentiated populations take up their place amongst numerous other alternative sources of individual and group reference. When we investigated the depiction of elderly people's sexuality in detail, we saw that, even in the 'praising discourse,' the elderly people focused on are mainly persons who are healthy and engaged in sexual activity and socially productive work, and the clear planning of life; these are people who contribute to the reproduction of both life and materials. In a sense there are contradictions in the discourses: on the one hand approval and praise go to all elderly people; on the other hand the productivity-obsessed standards of industrial society are reproduced with the focus on certain types of elderly people.

These contradictions explicitly reveal the conclusion of the following two questions. Why is there a similarity between Japan and Britain regarding sexual discourse about elderly people? Why has sexual discourse about elderly people systematically changed both in Japan and Britain through few decades?

In the development of modernised industrial society both Japan and Britain face a large emergent population of elderly people. Modern civil society realised its unique medical techniques and sanitary controls and made it possible for us human beings to live longer lives which we have never before reached. That is to say, the rapidly increasing numbers of elderly population is one of the best attainments of modern civil society – extending longevity in the population. Both Japan and Britain became members of 'the aged society' in 1980s<sup>7</sup>. It is not

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<sup>7</sup> In 1950 The United Nations defined the societies where 7 percent of members are age 65 and older as 'aged societies.'

coincidence that it was from 1980s that approval and praise started to go to all elderly people, because elderly people are the symbols of extending longevity in highly modernised industrial society. What Featherstone and Hepworth tried to demonstrate with regard to “mask of ageing” reflects this emerging elderly population’s states of ‘being’: “the forefront in the elaboration and expression of public vocabulary of ageing in direct opposition to the traditional static model.” [1991:387] Increasing numbers of elderly members of society who can afford to extend their retirement both in terms of sexuality and social productive work mediated the transition of elderly people’s sexual discourse from asexual to sexual. The emergence of a well-off elderly population, both financially and in health, was in the 1980s, with the ageing of baby boomers looking ahead to their own old age, translated into subjective and objective expectations of sexually fulfilled private lives.

However, modern civil society could not arrange the norms of these extended lives. The spread of this huge elderly population has trampled down on untrodden fields so much faster than anybody had expected, that the social welfare system in modernised industrial society, like the insurance system, pension schemes and the medical system can not accommodate to this rapidly increasing size of elderly population. In this context changing sexual discourse about elderly people can be seen as a strand in the process of “governability” in modernised industrial society, as Foucault states; a crafty device aiming to cultivate, discipline and integrate its mass elderly populations into a system of efficient and market concern. The requirement of industrialism, initially for male labour, shifts its range of sexual power/knowledge concerning self-determination and self-control away from procreative meanings to implicate all sections of the work-force. [Evans 1993:41] To upgrade sexual discourse about elderly people from asexual to sexual, symbolising the arrival of ideas of a self-determining, independent and well-established ageing



people, connoted the fact that elderly people had become first and foremost a social unit of great effective power. This was Foucault's conclusion and concern; the sexual discourse about elderly people is partly in line with a form of power according to standards of productivity and effectiveness in modern civil society.

## **5-2 The Non-Self-Determining and Non-Integrated Self in Sexual Discourse about Elderly People**

But alongside a form of power reproducing an autonomous and independent self in regard to elderly people are certain key dimensions of a non-self-determining and non-integrated self. I believe that these dimensions, although suppressed in the 'dominant' discourses which we have discussed in previous chapters, are vital for a proper understanding of the circumstances of elderly people today. Notwithstanding the change in elderly people over the past fifty years from asexual to sexual, these dimensions, which have occurred without intermittence, have never changed during the fifty years. But they may clearly be detected in both Japanese and British writing. Let me check them up.

### **[1] Lonely Self**

First, one of two descriptions of elderly people as a dimension of non-self-determining and non-integrated self in sexual discourse of elderly people is their feelings of loneliness. Let me give you examples from 1977, 1987 and 1997.

The sixty-eight year-old five-times married actor Rex Harrison known as “Sexy Remy” was said to be looking for a woman “... again” because he felt lonely. “Rex is trying to keep his mind off loneliness by working 12 hours a day, performing and trying to improve the play before it opens in New York.” (The Sun January 13th 1977) Again, a sixty-six year-old pensioner John Campbell who was banned from forcing his sixty-seven year-old ex-wife Catherine Race to have sex with him by the Court was described as a lonely heart. “Pensioner John Campbell is still love-lorn ... after being divorced for 17 years. And he ended up in a police cell after visiting his former wife at her home – clutching a bunch of plastic flowers.” (The Daily Record June 25th 1977)

The Daily Telegraph paid attention to a decision brought in by a judge who told a “lonely sex attacker.” The judge gave a sixty-one year-old man with three previous convictions for sexual assaults probation at Southwark Crown Court for indecently assaulting a four-year-old girl. The judge said the man was lonely, and needed a shoulder to cry on. “Everybody needs a shoulder to cry on at some time. I have myself – I’m not ashamed to admit it.” (The Daily Telegraph August 8th 1987) Here is similar example. “Perhaps they [British men who want Oriental brides especially from the Philippines] are too short or too old. They’re lonely.” (The People June 14th 1987)

This is the headline of the article about the oldest man in Britain to be convicted under laws brought in to protect people from stalkers. “A love-lorn 77-year-old, has been branded Britain’s oldest stalker after waging an eight-month hate campaign against his former lover. James Monk refused to accept that 55-year-old Mary Sands preferred a ‘younger’ man of 74. Monk had met her through a lonely hearts column [...]” (The Express October 22nd 1997) Again, the female writer, who provided counselling for people with problems, covered a quiet

group meeting in an old church hall in London where all types of people aged between twenty to seventy talked openly about being addicted to sex. She attributed their “desperate anguish of a sex addict” to their unloved, lonely heart. “It is easy to snigger at this sort of problem but sufferers say that sex can be as destructive as any other addiction. Many addicts have been abused as children, others just feel lonely and unloved.” (The Express September 25th 1997)

Here is another example. The fifty-one year-old horse trainer Jenny Pitman told why she married her forty-seven year-old partner David Stait after an eighteen-year courtship. She attributed the decision to marry her first husband to “the naivete of youth.” “I was very, very lonely. You can have all the romance, the glitz and the lusting if you like, but once that’s passed, if you don’t have your best mate stood along side you you’ve got nothing.” (The Express October 25th 1997)

Put the matter of sexual intercourse aside, no one was to blame the seventy-seven year-old widow Mrs. Salmon when she fell in love with Sergeant Davies. Mrs. Salmon whose husband died in 1968 was justified in phoning and coming around to the police station because she was a lonely elderly woman “craving company.” (ibid, The Daily Record April 7th 1977) “She was lonely, frail and frightened of being on her own at night. She would telephone the police as a cry for help, the Judge said.” (ibid, The Daily Mail April 7th 1997) “Living alone in her big house, she was extremely dependent upon police reassurance for her security,” he [one of Sergeant Davies’s counsels] said. ‘She also depended on the police force for someone to talk [...]. She was not above triggering off her own burglar alarm to attract attention.’” (ibid, The Sun January 25th 1977) Everybody described as “not surprised” (ibid, The Daily Mail April 7<sup>th</sup> 1977) the methods used in getting Sergeant Davies into spending most of his time, except at night, on standing by Mrs. Salmon with his “understanding her predicament, her frailty and her loneliness.” (The Guardian January 27th 1977)

Eighty-five year-old Mr. Walter Taylor, one of three elderly men who talked about their experiences at Madame Payne's parties, described "the get-togethers" at her home, as like executive or private parties. (ibid, The Independent February 6th 1987) Madame Payne told the court that she had been lonely since her Ambleside Avenue brothel had been closed down in 1978 and that since she was released from jail in 1980 her loneliness was best relieved by her parties. (The Daily Telegraph February 5th 1987) "Mrs Payne told the court about the private side of her life, and said her wild parties were a cure for loneliness. 'I enjoyed having parties because basically I was lonely. I think everyone else who came was lonely too,' she said." (The Independent February 5th 1987) "The Tattooed Lady" Ann Aaron said the parties were "frank and free, because guests acted out their fantasies without fear of being ridiculed. They indulged in fascinating conversation about their various fetishes and everyone joined in the fun." (ibid, The Daily Record February 12th 1987) People testifying for the defence repeated that the parties were "the get-togethers."

Last, let us look into the lonely self in Japanese sexual discourse of elderly people. As I noted already in chapter 1, for the last two decades, despite the real inter-generational family values in Japan, the selfish life-cycle model dominates household saving behaviour in Japan. Japanese families feel less obliged to provide welfare for their immediate members, let alone elderly people in general. Just after the foundation of *Chanomi-Tomodachi-Sodanshitsu*, which I mentioned in chapter 3, its director answered a Fujinkoron reporter during a different interview. "They [elderly people who applied for the dating agency] are just very, very lonely. They are seeking a new relationship. Their wish is more pressing than we [the officials of the institution] expected." (Fujinkoron August 1976) The *Chanomi-Tomodachi-Sodanshitsu* have succeeded in arranging about two thousand couples' dates over five years and conducted a survey asking the reasons why its applicants want to get married. The answer; "because I am lonely." or "because I

crave company.” predominated. (Ushio March 1983) The following is what one of the participants in group dating in another organisation said. “I feel small, sad and lonely. At night after it has rained for two days I foresee dying. I just want to get close to anyone again and feel at ease. Sex is a secondary matter. All I want is a warm heart.” (Shukan Josei July 30th 1991)

## **[2] Shadow of Frailty Being Inconsistent with Self-Determining and Highly Integrated Self**

As I mentioned above, the main subjects in sexual discourse of elderly people in both Japan and Britain are persons described as possessing youth, health, the ability to work and manage their own lives, and as having a positive attitude toward their future – sometimes a rosy future. One would not easily object to saying that such conceptualisations serve to strengthen productivity and effectiveness in modern civil society and they can be regarded as evincing self-determining and highly integrated selves, displaying autonomy and independence.

However, if elderly people are regarded as autonomous and independent selves, it is rather a mixed blessing. Thus, in ‘representations of exceptional sexuality,’ old age was not welcome. The more youthfulness in elderly people was emphasised the funnier the gap between the status quo and elderly poses sometimes became. “‘I [Lord Huntly, Scotland’s premier marques and chieftain of the clan Gordon, who was to marry a twenty year-old girl] am only in my 69th year, so I am really a young man. Why should I marry some dried up old bag?’ [...] ‘I’m a very fit man, in fact, and I walk my dog every day.’ He went on: ‘I’m not blind, I don’t have to wear spectacles, and I still have my own teeth.’” (The Sun January 24th 1977) In short, the discourse makes plain that physical and mental decay are a fact of nature.

The seventy-seven year-old Mrs. Salmon's misunderstanding was suspected as delusion even though her doctor Dr. John Riley said: "I never had the impression that she was mentally deranged." (The Daily Telegraph February 4th 1977) "She was living in cloud cuckoo land. [...]" As happens with old people, she was losing touch with reality. Her mental condition was deteriorating." (The Guardian February 2nd 1977) Mrs. Salmon was diagnosed as having senile dementia and mentally ill in a nursing home where she died two months later. This diagnosis was based on what Mrs. Salmon's told a consultant psychiatrist of poisoners murdering her. The consultant psychiatrist Dr. Alex Baker said that if he had heard in 1973 what Mrs. Salmon thought about Sergeant Davies [...] it would only have confirmed his diagnosis in the High Court. (The Daily Telegraph February 8th 1977) The solicitor who drew up the 1973 will said "It's fairly regular for clients making wills to speak in this way. I associate it with old ladies but I have met old men who say they are being poisoned or spied on." (The Daily Telegraph February 10th 1977) Although Mrs. Salmon's distant cousin Air Vice-Marshal Edward Crew who knew her well and gave evidence in the dispute over the validity of Mrs. Salmon's last will claimed that this was just an eccentric old lady making jokes about poisoning, Mr. John Wilmers, QC, for the five challengers of the 1973 will sceptically replied to the court in general: "Your own mother is in her eighties, what do you think?" (The Guardian February 15th 1977)

Although the court case was won by the main beneficiary, former police Sergeant Davies (The Guardian September 10th 1977), this public trial exemplifies how the construction of self-determining and highly integrated self in sexual discourse about elderly people is challenged. In another case, The Daily Record reporter wrote down what the judge in the High Court Family Division in London said on the nullity decree of eighty-three year-old millionaire Frank Yarwood's wedding with sixty-five year old divorcee Mary Picken-Kennaway on the grounds that he was an "unknowing groom." (The Daily Record May 14th 1987) The judge said: "he did not



believe her [Mrs. Picken-Kennaway's] story of frequent proposals or claims that the couple had sex in the lounge." (ibid, The Daily Record May 14th 1987)

Madame Payne told the court that she liked dealing with elderly people who had sex problems. "Very old men (original). Walter Taylor, 84, was past his best time for 100 metres. And Norman Price, 72, but going like someone much younger. [...] He had a young heart. 'Why, he still plays bowls on the front down in Brighton.'" (The Daily Mail February 5th 1987) However she also described them as vulnerable elderly people. "There were old men scattering down the avenue [like the homeless]. 'You couldn't see them for dust.'" (ibid, The Daily Mail February 5th 1987) As I mentioned above, after the verdict was concluded the tattooed hostess Ann Aaron was interviewed and said that most of guests were incapable of having sex and they just fantasised. "It was just like a Conservative tea-party, with bank managers, vicars, civil servants and businessmen, except that a lot of them were transvestites. [...] Cynthia went to great lengths to accommodate her elderly guests' little foibles. [...] It was ridiculous. They [the police and its representatives] obviously expected an orgy, and when they didn't they just decided to take it out on us." (ibid, The Daily Record February 12th 1987) The trial over "Madame Payne's home" was haunted by the image of both "orgy" and "vicar's party."

However much elderly people's youthfulness is asserted sometimes we can not help but stare at their old age. For example even if it gives victims a second pain old age sometimes allows an offender to walk out of the court a free man. In the sentence for abusing ten year-old girl and six year-old girls between 1958 to 1995 the broken seventy-eight year-old old pervert Alexander Currie was given a one-year jail sentence in view of his age and failing health. (The Express July 27<sup>th</sup> 1997)



Here is another example. James Farman, “the oldest person to be indicated at the High Court” (The Herald January 13th 1997) was released by the court despite it being found that he perpetrated a series of sex offences. (The Herald July 22nd 1997) Again, although in the sentence on the seventy-seven year-old “pervert” Tegid Williams’ latest offence against two sisters, who were eight and ten, the family of the victims lashed out at a judge, the sheriff said: “[‘His maximum sentence was three years in jail – was inadequate but’] he would NOT [writer’s emphasis] impose more than three years.” (The Daily Record July 16th 1997)

A spokesman for Granada TV, Coronation Street’s television station, said of Mr. Waddington’s decision: “It came as no surprise because he is after all 81.” (ibid, The Daily Telegraph June 12th 1997) Although he won millions of fans as the “soap’s indispensable veteran,” people were suspicious of his motives. “Some people say that at 81, how does he know? But actor Bill Waddington raises a vital point about All the soaps [writer’s emphasis].” (ibid, The Sun June 12th 1997) Mr. Waddington’s view drew sharp criticism from sixteen year-old studio technician Craig Connor: “Percy is just using this as an excuse to get out with a bit of dignity.” (ibid, The Sun June 12th 1997)

Failing bodies and frailty are burdens to living autonomous and independent lives. These circumstances reflect non-self-determining and non-integrated selves, characterised as unbounded and dependent in his/her daily life. Notwithstanding changes in sexual discourse about elderly people that neatly underscored an autonomous and independent self, unbounded and dependent elderly selves subvert ideas of self-determination and integration amongst elderly people. These non-self-determining and non-integrated selves reflect elderly corporality and old age. Thanks to social constructionism, change in sexual discourse about elderly people, including from asexuality to sexuality, continues unabated. But the self-evident fact of bodily decline and death continues

to betray the construction of self-determining and highly integrated self. This is biological nature. Therefore, the contemporary elaboration of the transitional states of elderly selves and their sexuality is significant. The emerging social constructionist idea that elderly person are powerful and successful in well-organised lives and social activities in old age is compromised by their traditional image – as being ineffective, unbounded and dependent. Without this complex of ideas we will reproduce a clear formulation of the division between young-like, autonomous and independent elderly people and unbounded and dependent elderly people of old age. My elaboration permits a more dynamic approach to elderly people's sexuality and elderly people themselves.

### **[3] The Negative Background**

Last, a depiction of elderly people's sexuality as a non-self-determining and non-integrated self is the premise that elderly people's sexuality has been always an anathema. Notwithstanding, the change is the dominant discourse, including the move from asexuality to sexuality, this premise, which echoes the 'critical view' of elderly people's sexuality, has always existed as a background notion. In Britain this background notions is clearly present even in 'enlightened' 1997.

The sixty-eight year-old pensioner rapist George Dickinson got a warning from a judge at Leeds Crown Court as follows. "Give it up before you kill yourself." (The Sun March 29th 1977) George was said to talk of marriage with his seventy year-old victim "because both were lonely." (ibid, The Sun March 29th 1977)

As to Japan, “Sexuality of elderly people has been a taboo subject. It seems that any elderly people are socially forced to lose their sexual desire. What is practiced in the low-dependency nursing care units is vital evidence: even married couples have to live separately. Suppose an honest elderly man admits he has sexual desire he is called dirty old man. [...] As to an elderly woman she is stigmatised as a lusting old woman – obviously they are assumed to stop at a certain age.” (Fujinkoron July 1978)

This is part of an article about a travel sketch of the Yorkshire coast. “She hoists a led over his shoulder. ‘Funny place t’ keep a hedgehog,’ wonders somebody aloud, and the act roars on. And so do John and I. The jokes against puffs, lezzies, and Pakis would rightly cause the wrong kind of riot on the Alternative Cabaret circuit: but in her own inimitable way Tassie also confounds deeply entrenched prejudices about old people. The old are not even supposed to think about sex, let alone do it. And unlike the young, who desperately conform to their own standards, old people – given half a chance – are naturally anarchic.” (ibid, The Guardian August 22nd 1987)

“Every so often there are sayings that ‘Elderly people’s sexuality withered up.’ ‘Elderly people have no sexual desire.’ and ‘Elderly people are unable to have sexual intercourse.’ – Elderly people are supposed to be nasty and abnormal. If once he follows his urge to stick his neck out admitting his sexual desire, some lose their personality because it is said be nasty, unpleasant and disturbing, regardless of how respectable the man actually is.” (Fujinkoron July 1985)

“Every so often there’s a story about ‘love finding a way’ featuring lovers of at least 70. They may have lost touch during the war and married other partners. When one died, the survivor somehow or other met up again with his or her first love, by this time also alone. Of course, we

wish them well and happy. And either give it no further thought or imagine that keeping each other's backs warm and the chaste kiss they share for the cameras is all they're up to. [...] It's OK to fall in love if you're older – especially if it involves suffering and making do, or doing without. But sex, whether gymnastic or emotional, is reckoned to be the preserve of the young. [...] [...] Passion could not be for people of that age. Such an idea is irresponsible, untidy and repulsive.” (The Independent August 14th 1997)

“In Japan passion could not be for people of that age. Such an idea is irresponsible, untidy and repulsive. Never before has a story about ‘love finding a (final) way’ featuring lovers of at least 60 ‘in nursing homes’ been so noticeable [As I noted in chapter 3 there has been this type of story since the latter half of the 1950s in Japan.].” (Jiyujikan November 17th 1994)

“There’s an assumption that it’s weird, embarrassing, if old people fall in love, and they are expected to abandon lust. I ask Naomi [the one hundred year-old novelist Naomi Mitchison] if one ever loses the desire for passion. ‘Oh no! I’m afraid I did things everyone thought wrong – and I enjoyed it.’” (The Guardian November 17th 1997)

“In Japan where most people learn to do other than speak out in others’ presence, the middle aged and elderly people’s sexuality is hard to express. We are far more confident about declaring that we no longer engage in it [sex]. However, just behind this sexual desire is whirling and elderly people are suffering from it alone.” (Gendai October 1996)

“There’s something creepy in our society about older people having sex. Men are called ‘dirty old man’ and women – well, women just don’t, do they? Not once they’re past child-bearing age, anyway.” (The Daily Mail November 21st 1997)

“In Japan I think we elderly people are all quite wonderful if we would stop talking about sex and sexuality. [...] There are plenty of men and women who still think that sexually active elderly people are nasty and embarrassing.” (Shukan Yomiuri June 19th 1994)

This is one of the letters to The Independent editor on the 16th of August in 1997. “Sir: Thank you, Anna Raeburn, for pointing out that older people do have, and enjoy, sex. [...] Unfortunately the Health Education Authority thinks otherwise. They have just published a report, *Health in England 1996*, in which most of the statistics only cover people up to the age of 74, which is bad enough. But the sections on sex and drugs stop at 54 years. How do they think we spend our retirement? The HEA should further its own education by talking to us old’uns, who probably are just as sexually active, but spend less time bragging about it.”

“The young actually have the monopoly they claim on love and intimacy. In Japan where the markets are flooded with youth’s nude pictures and visual products any junior high school and high school girls dressed in frilly French maid’s costumes or looking sensational cause a stir and can be worth money. On the other hand, what happens to elderly people if it is true that they think about sex, let alone do it? They are sneered to silence and called dirty, unpleasant and disturbing old people. But why can not they carry it on into old age? There seems to be the most devilish tragedy and crucifixion that sexual civil rights are out of elderly people’s reach.” (Hoseki February 1996)

Although the court case over Mrs. Salmon’s will was won by the main beneficiary, former police Sergeant Davies, the Judge has never believed that she had had sexual intercourse with Sergeant Davies.

When the trial of Madame Payne moved into its final stages her defence lawyer Mr. David Spens told the court that “You don’t get any of the dross, only the highlights. The events at 32 Ambleside Avenue [the Madame Payne’s house] may have seemed unpleasant, distasteful, and sordid when served up in this court room on a cold plate, but for the men who attended those parties they got what they wanted and they paid the prostitutes for it.” (ibid, The Guardian February 10th 1987) He also said that sexual activity at “The House of Cyn” was “pretty normal, ordinary, commonplace and conventional heterosexual sex” in his closing speech. (The Daily Telegraph February 10th 1987) However Madame Payne could never be free from the reputation that she “would like the world to think of her and the way she caters to the fancies of foolish old men.” (ibid, The Daily Express February 12th 1987)

This is an excerpt from The Sun exclusive about “Street actor” Bill Waddington’s claim. “Actor Bill Waddington is the octogenarian who says Coronation Street has got too much sex. [...] When you’re as ancient as Bill – a.k.a. Percy Sugden – *any* [writer’s emphasis] sex comes as a bit of a shock. [...] When he bought Denise a ring, the other women on the Street didn’t just admire it – 27 of them recognised it. [...] [...] but a hell of a lot [an old favourite] is merely resistance to change. If you are prudish enough to be genuinely shocked by the tame bedroom scenes in The Street, I suggest you stick to Gardener’s World.” (ibid, The Sun June 12th 1997)

Despite the current domination of social constructionism the negative background of elderly people’s sexuality will never die. Nobody can escape mortality and morbidity. The fact is that in a time when people are increasingly tolerant of sexual self-determination and self-control for every segment of our population many of us still cling to puritanical ideas in our approach towards sexuality in elder people. This reflects our fear, hate against and refusal of the existence of the non-malleable ageing body and death which results in disorder relating to conventional

norms and regulatory laws. Sexual discourse about elderly people continues to place stumbling and grumbling blocks in the road to social evolutionary progress and personal happiness upon which the social constructionist view is hooked up. We can not understand elderly people's sexuality solely through dimensions of self-determination and self-control. In addition to this, elderly 'being' happens in accordance with a gradual disengagement from pre-existing and institutionalised social norms; in a sense, nobody can fully access authenticity in elderly people's sexuality. This ineffability relating to elderly people's sexuality accounts for the dissatisfaction at elderly people's sexuality that tends to be felt in the population at large (It's out of our reach.).

### **5-3 The Potentiality of Personhood in Elderly People's Sexuality**

In highly modernised and industrialised societies elderly people who still engage in and relish their sexual lives are expected to be those who succeed in having well-organised, autonomous and independent lives as self-determining and highly integrated selves. Change in sexual discourse about elderly people from asexual to sexual has been inspired by populations in Japan and Britain people benefiting from increased longevity. In 'exceptional' 'approving' and 'praising' sexual discourse about elderly people, young effective elderly people displaying autonomy and independence function as mediators between sexuality and old age. Moreover, in the 'period of approval,' the invention of category of human means the differences between younger people and elderly people vanished. Therefore, we can at least say that the dualism of effective developing youth versus ineffective declining old age can not be reproduced in sexual discourse about elderly people. During these past fifty years, the 'natural fact' that elderly people are ineffective has come to be doubted.



Notwithstanding this, although suppressed by ‘dominant’ discourses, what has been never changed in sexual discourse about elderly people over the past fifty years is certain key dimensions of non-self-determining and non-integrated selves; the lonely self, the shadow of frailty and the negative imprecations surrounding old age and sex. This reflects, as I argued already, our biological nature – the medicalised body and the malfunctioning body. [Tulle-Winton 2000] Death is inevitable and postponed death obliges the beneficiaries of extended lives to face old age. The more subjectivity is emphasised the more the self-evident fact of bodily decline and death continues to betray it. Lonely emotions, declining bodies and the negative form sexuality have never been eliminated from sexual discourse about elderly people.

In a sense, then, unbound and dependent selves co-exist with the ‘dominant’ effective selves in sexual discourse about elderly people. Therefore, sexual discourse about elderly people is beyond the reach of biologically based differentials in power. This is the point social constructionism and Foucault’s discursive dominance can not access.

In addition to this, ‘praising discourse’ about elderly people’s sexuality is hopeful. This includes the space to nullify the clear boundary between youth-like, autonomous, independent and effective elderly people and unbounded, dependent and ineffective elderly people. It holds two opposite images: that of *kotan*, which carried with it the idea of decline as peculiar to elderly people’s sexuality, and also that of sexuality comparable to that of young people. Historically, in the period when the ‘criticism’ discourse dominated elderly sexuality was expected to be withering up, connoting the elderly as unbounded, dependent and ineffective selves. In contrast, in the period of ‘exceptional’ ‘approving’ and ‘praising’ discourses where sexuality contained(s) an active and growing image, elderly people could be/were deemed to be youth-like, independent and effective – as having self-determining and highly integrated selves. In the ‘praising’

perspective, where elderly people are allowed to be possessors of both withering sexuality and growing sexuality there must be an interpretation of a complex of transitional states amongst elderly people. Through flexible adjustments to the gradually blurring hierarchical boundaries between an autonomous, independent and effective self and unbounded, dependent and ineffective selves, sexual discourse about elderly people implies the possibility of renewing the idea of modernised personhood.

Furthermore, in the 'praising' of elderly people's sexuality there is room for bedridden elderly people and senile elderly people whose sexuality is impossible to construct in the terms of self-determining and highly integrated self. The following extract is based on the report on *Seiunkan* (literally, "Floating Home in the Blue Sky"), where elderly people and senile elderly people live together. *Totoro* is the president of the institute. In this case, because the female narrator must seriously confront the existence of senile elderly people, she depicts an idea of personhood which differs from the modernised one. Only the kind of personhood that stands between animals and human beings is possible. The self-evident fact of bodily decline and death continues to betray the construction of self-determining and highly integrated self, because a senile body is incapable of subjectivity. And the narrator is free from subjectivity as well. There is no reply. In this space, life and death, which stand respectively for autonomous and independent self and unbounded and dependent self in its ultimate mode, coexist. Here is the point where neither Althusser's interpellation nor social constructionism reach. As a result, there is room for a new meaning that does away with standards of productivity and effectiveness and constraining social roles and norms. And in this ultimate 'blank' what the narrator vaguely expresses as the idea of "an animal human being," she strongly hopes for "a feeling of togetherness." This feeling of togetherness is the key dimension of non-self-determining and non-

integrated selves. As both Japanese society and British society become an aging society, prospects of new personhood are expected.

“Beyond [the opening door] I heard the words, ‘I am sorry for doing a trifling thing.’ Looking back quickly I saw a woman with short hair who was riding a portable chamber pot .... Her thick beautiful buttocks. It is me who must apologise, ‘I am sorry.’ [...] The space where we can pass waste openly consists of the space we can have sex in, doesn’t it? But, though I watched a woman passing waste, I did not witness sex. What makes me so confused? Am I angry or do I understand? I do not know. All I want as ‘an animal human being’ is to pass waste in the place where no one can see. No, this is not what I really want. The woman who said, ‘I am sorry for doing a trifling thing,’ looked beautiful. If a human being is forced to pass waste in an open space, it becomes beautiful. But ... .... Is it all right with *Totoro*? [...] To be protected as an animal human being seems to be the most important thing for the elderly people living here. It is not until we transcend sex that we get true peacefulness. [...] Elderly people would share a feeling of togetherness sprouted in transparent despair and would get on the same boat sailing between this world and that world. It gently makes us know the principle of the universe seen from transparent despair. And, because I desire to have my whole existence pierced by those who share transparent despair, my sensuality and sensibility are vigorously at work when I sit by elderly people.” (Shincho 45 July 1990)

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## Appendix 1

# Japanese Magazines

**Aera** ----- This was first issued in 1988. Approximately businessmen in their thirties make up the core readers. The proportion of men to women amongst the readers is seven to three. This weekly magazine is characterised by the idea of displaying striking originality in daily news and of using many visual materials to make it easy to understand no matter how difficult the topics may be.

**Asahi Journal** (Asahi literally means “the Morning Sun”) ----- This was first published in 1959. This weekly magazine deals mainly with news and commentaries. Over seventy percent of the readers are said to be highly educated people. In April 1984 the Asahi Journal policy was revised so as not to drift toward briefer magazines but to conquer this trend while broadening horizons.

**Bisho** (literally, “Smile”) ----- This bimonthly magazine, whose core readers are single women in their twenties, first appeared in 1971. It deals with both practical issues like cooking and childrearing. Gossip concerning celebrities, travel, marriage life, sex, and marital problems are also covered.

**Bungeishunju** (literally, “All Literature”) ----- This intellectual monthly magazine which has been perceived as “a national general magazine” is representative of Japanese journalism. It first appeared in 1923. It has challenged people to tackle the dark side of Japanese society that large newspaper companies dare not address (along with Shukan Bunshu). No other general interest magazines like Bungeishunju are in print. It has sold more than one million copies of a particular issue several times.

**Chuokoron** (literally, “Opinion Leader”) ----- This monthly magazine, first issued in 1887, meets many of the needs of modern knowledgeable readers. It includes exclusive articles, short theses concerning politics, economics, society and current thought, documents, reports, foreign readings and famous author’s writings.

**Croissant** ----- This was launched in 1977 and is issued twice a month. Ninety percent of the readers are women and seventy percent of them are under thirty-five years old. Although it was started as a family-oriented magazine, recently the circulation has increased after it expanded to focus on modern women's way of life.

**Dime** ----- This up-to-date bimonthly magazine, started in 1986, focuses on what is going on in town and in companies. It targets twenty-five to thirty-five-year-old businessmen who are considered to be on the front line of both work and pleasure.

**Fujinkoron** (literally, "Female Opinion Leader") ----- This monthly magazine started in 1916 is different from other female magazines in both contents and size; while others are visually appealing magazines this magazine concerning true women's welfare is verbally provoking. With the unique feature of requiring reader participation it carries reader's essays. Ninety-five percent of its readers are women. Their ages are flatly distributed from teens to seventies.

**Gendai** (literally, "Today") ----- This was first published in 1966. Ninety percent of its readers are men. This monthly magazine began from a deep interest amongst middle-class businessmen. It has been perceived as "an indispensable magazine for modern businessmen, including political, economic and business information that is ahead of its time, to practical information that is useful for daily life."

**Hoseki** (literally, "Jewel") ----- This monthly male magazine started in 1965. The majority of its readers are businessmen and students. With intensive application to people who want to be or are active social contributors, it covers new insights and practical topics like travel, investment and health.

**Jiyujikan** (literally, "Spare Time") ----- This bimonthly magazine targeting men in their forties was first issued in 1990. It focuses on the way of life relating enjoyable private life and the creativity of business.

**Jyoseijishin** (literally, "Women Themselves") ----- Seventy percent of its readers are eighteen to twenty-four-year-old women. It is the best-selling female weekly magazine, first issued in 1958, containing articles about fashion and shopping.

**Jyoseiseven** (literally, “Clamorous Women”) ----- This weekly magazine, first issued in 1963, consists of articles that satisfy young women’s interests including those of fashion, beauty culture, cooking, travel and interior decoration. Its characteristic feature is a dedicated collection of data.

**Reader’s Digest** ----- This is the Japanese version of the same titled magazine published in U.S.A. started in 1946. Although this monthly magazine is translated into many languages in the world, an original Japanese column is inserted.

**Ninchi** (literally, “Awareness”) ----- This member monthly magazine appeared in 1978 to enhance self-enlightenment and Zen in business management and daily life. It is composed of stories of managers who have suffered, human education, the introduction of outstanding people in various areas, health advice and counselling.

**Sarai** ----- This was first issued in 1989 and is published twice a month. This unisex magazine designed to meet the demand for high quality and genuineness provides basic information to enjoy a comfortable lifestyle. Its core readers are in their fifties to seventies.

**Shukan Asahi** ----- This was launched in 1922. This news-oriented weekly magazine made its first appearance in unisex form; however as time passes the number of male readers are decreasing. Its topics range from politics, economics, and social affairs to culture, with an intensive application of a newspaper’s advantage to exclusive projects.

**Shukan Bunshu** (Bunshu literally means “Literature”) ----- The second established publishing company launched this magazine in 1959. In the beginning eighty percent of readers were men, but the proportion of women readers has increased since the latter half of 1980s such that the number of female readers is now equal to the number of male readers. This weekly magazine is famous for covering the cruel phases of life and the unveiling darkness in Japanese society.

**Shukan Gendai** ----- In 1959 it was first issued. This general weekly magazine focuses on middle-aged and businessmen. In addition to rich information and subjects it bends its emphasis towards non-fiction and fiction concerning social and business circumstances. Its correspondents and editors rigorously pursue their immediate emotional involvement in an original way.

**Shukan Heibon** (Heibon literally means “Mediocrity”) ----- This was first issued in 1959. Although in March 1983 this weekly magazine about public entertainment dealt with sport and economic celebrities, in March 1985 it went back to handling public entertainment only. Target readers are between eighteen and thirty year old women.

**Shukan Hoseki** ----- This weekly magazine, intended for from twenty-five to thirty-year-old businessmen who were born and raised in post war Japan, started in 1981. It covers finance, economics, politics, education, science, medical science, sports, entertainment, cooking, fashion and sex.

**Shukan Jyosei** (Jyosei literally means “Women”) ----- It was launched in 1957. Since it was started this weekly women’s magazine has contributed to the development of the female market. This offers insight into modern women’s way of life, covering true love and marriage stories in all its nakedness.

**Shukan Kinyobi** (Kinyobi literally means “Friday”) ----- This was first issued in 1993. A criticism-centred weekly magazine organised by sought-after people like writer Hisashi Inoue, writer Makoto Shiina, journalist Tetsuya Tsukushi, journalist Katsuichi Honda, it is not afraid of forestalling controversy and refuses to compromise.

**Shukan Myojyo** (Myojyo literally means “the Morning Star, Lucifer”) ----- This was first issued in 1958. Eighty-five percent of its readers are women. This weekly magazine covers the latest information about Stars, news on show business and the latest information about TV programmes. From March 1983 as it increased its pages it expanded to include further topics and to pick up more humane concerns.

**Shukan Post** ----- This male-centred best-selling weekly magazine started in 1969. Housewives number about one-tenth of all its readers. Its threefold editorial policy covers the forecast of the near future, the choice of information, and the importance that it be representative of all readers.

**Shukan Sankei** (Sankei literally means “Industry and Economy”) ----- This was first published in 1952. Eighty percent of its readers are men and most of them are office workers. This news company-owned weekly magazine copes with what newspapers cannot deal with. Its editors try to tell exciting stories rather than express social criticism.

**Shukan Shincho** (Shincho literally means “New Trend”) ----- The first publishing company issued this magazine in 1956. Known as “an update booklet of society” it enjoys the majority’s favour. Many readers are middle-aged people.

**Shukan Shosetsu** (Shosetsu literally means “Novels”) ----- Since its launch in 1972 this has been a forerunner amongst popular novels. The three main segments of this book are about companies, a detective novel and a voluptuous novel.

**Shincho 45** (Yonjyugo) ----- Seventy-five percent of the readers of this ripe age-oriented general magazine are men; thirty percent are in their fifties, twenty percent in their forties and ten percent in their thirties. It includes diaries and autobiographies.

**Shukan Yomiuri** (Yomiuri literally means “Publisher”) ----- This was first published in 1938. In addition to a series of novels, it is characterised by daily news and feature articles.

**Spa** ----- In June 1988 its title changed from Shukan Sankei. This weekly magazine mainly aims at being useful to thirty plus businessmen in both their private and public lives. Seventy to eighty percent of its readers are men.

**Sunday Mainichi** (Mainichi literally means “Daily”) ----- This weekly magazine started in 1922 covers hidden stories, which newspapers avoid, providing them as a series of articles. The popularity of its unique formation boosted its circulation. In October 1989 it was revised and it now has a good reputation as a stimulating weekly magazine.

**Ushio** (literally, “Tide”) ----- This was first issued in 1960. Since its start it has been valued amongst men. About eighty percent of its readers are men. Its unique subjects and agenda – “*One Million Witnesses*” – have paved the way for the development of a new type of opinion

leader – based on ordinary people's witness seeking the background of events usually receiving the least public attention.

**Young Lady**-----This literally young female-oriented magazine was first issued in 1964 and is published every two weeks. Besides fashion it explores travel, shopping, handwork and interior decoration.



## Appendix 2

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